

# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

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	PAGE
TOBACCO AND COFFEE IN MUSIC . . . . . CHARLES VAN DEN BORREN ( <i>Brussels</i> )	355
HAW, WELLS, BINYON, AND MUSIC . . . . . BASIL MAINE ( <i>London</i> )	375
MONTEVERDI . . . . . G. FRANCESCO MALIPIERO ( <i>Asolo</i> )	383
MODERN ITALIAN COMPOSERS . . . . . GUIDO M. GATTI ( <i>Turin</i> )	397
THE MUSICAL CLOCK OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE . . . . . JULIEN TIERSOT ( <i>Paris</i> )	411
CHOPIN AND JENNY LIND . . . . . MARTIAL DOUËL ( <i>Paris</i> )	423
THE CRADLE OF THE PARSIFAL LEGEND . . . . . MAX UNGER ( <i>Leipzig</i> )	428
THE ART OF THE SYMPHONIC POEM . . . . . R. W. S. MENDEL ( <i>London</i> )	443
LUDWIG THUILLE . . . . . EDGAR ISTEL ( <i>Madrid</i> )	463
CEREMONIAL DANCES OF THE SPANISH BASQUES . VIOLET ALFORD ( <i>Bayonne, France</i> )	471
NEWS AND REVIEWS . . . . .	483
QUARTERLY BOOK-LIST . . . . .	498

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# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

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## TOBACCO AND COFFEE IN MUSIC

By CHARLES VAN DEN BORREN

**T**OBACCO and Coffee, albeit needful and delightful to some, are rather prosaic objects and seemingly not apt to excite the poet's verve or the musician's fancy. And were it not for the charming *Kaffee-Kantate* of John Sebastian Bach, which every one knows, perhaps it would be right to look upon as foolish the quest for compositions inspired by coffee or tobacco.

But even the most material things are likely to take on a poetical aspect. Of course, it might prove vain to search for serious poetry in praise of such food-stuffs as potatoes, sugar, or chocolate, although Metastasio devoted to the last-named sweet a little cantata, to which we shall revert further on.

Tobacco and coffee—the words themselves are both charming and vigorous in all languages—have countless advantages over their commonplace fellow-products, derived from their aroma, their taste, and the many other salutary qualities rightly or not attributed to them. The delicate blue cloud of tobacco-smoke, the atmosphere of coziness and comfort brought about by the use of these two exotic plants are, needless to say, elements not unworthy to tempt a musician who is sensitive to the tranquil joys of home. But that is not all: tobacco and coffee have often caused trouble between man and wife. The wife—before cigarette-smoking was adopted by an emancipated fairer sex—was inclined to frown upon the “smoke nuisance” as injurious to the atmosphere and to her pretty white muslin curtains, while the husband would accuse his better half of an immoderate indulgence in the stimulating infiltration of the coffee bean. The

quarrel had its comic side, it offered the stuff for burlesque or satire; and neither poet nor musician, great or small, overlooked the opportunity.

An echo of all this will be found in the pieces on tobacco and coffee that we are going to consider here. The present inquiry does not in the least pretend to exhaust the subject. The few discoveries we have made during our study of it are, indeed, the result of chance rather than of systematic research; and we are convinced that if the investigation were to be continued, much more could be found that would lengthen the list. At any rate, we shall see in the following that aesthetics have not suffered too much from the intrusion of tobacco or coffee in their domain, and that sometimes they have even most agreeably profited by it.

\* \* \*

Tobacco became generally known in Europe about the beginning of the seventeenth century. It had, then as now, a variety of uses. In the higher classes of society only "snuffing" was to be thought of; "smoking" was for the common people, "chewing" represented the last stage of vulgarity. In the eighteenth century these standards and customs remained the same. When, in his youth, the abbé Metastasio (1698-1782) wrote his double cantata entitled *La Cioccolata e'l Tabacco*,<sup>1</sup> he never even thought of mentioning smokers. Conceived in the form of an epistle to Clori, and written in a style full of elegance and graces, the second panel of this diptych (*Il Tabacco*) takes to task those uncouth beings, both men and women, who stuff their nostrils with snuff and thus soil their faces and cause their clothing to give forth disagreeable odors. The poem, of considerable length, passes judgment on those who, catering to the whims of their olfactory organ, merely add one more vice to those for which the other senses are responsible. The poet touches in detail upon the origin, cultivation, and preparation of tobacco, and gives elaborate descriptions of luxurious snuff-boxes fashioned by such artists as Albi and Sebeto: all of it clothed in verses harmoniously and delicately wrought. The supposition that *La Cioccolata* and *Il Tabacco* ever inspired a composer to set them to music should, we believe, be rejected, in spite of the title "Cantata" that Metastasio gave to his poem. This author, who excelled as no other in serving the needs of musicians, probably never had the least intention that his diptych, the form of which is in no way appropriate to such use, should become a libretto. "Cantata" should therefore be understood in a broad sense here, as when Voltaire begins the *Henriade* with: "I sing

<sup>1</sup>*Poesie del Signor Abate Pietro Metastasio*, Torino, 1787, vol. XI, pp. 349 ff.

(*Je chante*) the hero that reigned over France," following the example of Vergil's "Arma virumque cano".

As we have already said, smoking was not looked on of old as a respectable habit. But there seem to have been some exceptions since one of the first musical pieces to celebrate tobacco alludes to its smoke in words that have nothing scornful about them. This piece is a five-part madrigal by Michael East, published in London in 1606, in the author's *Second Set of Madrigals* and reproduced in modern notation in vol. XXX (p.115) of Dr. Fellowes's admirable collection, "The English Madrigal School". Here is the text:

O Metaphysical Tobacco,  
Fetched as far as from Morocco,  
Thy searching fume exhales the rheum.

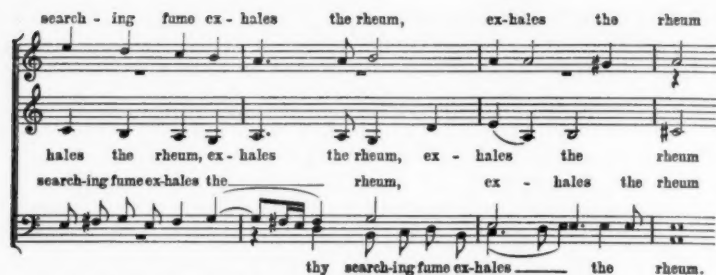
The word "metaphysical" is taken in a very peculiar sense here. Perhaps it is simply used as a synonym for "dreamy" or "poetical". So here tobacco and its smoke are promoted to the rank of entities worthy to be celebrated in music in the aristocratic circles for which the madrigals were designed. Michael East was not the only one to bestow the honors of music on tobacco in the time of Shakespeare. Not later than 1605, Captain Tobias Hume introduced in his *Ayres* (1st part) a piece beginning with the words *Tobacco, tobacco, sing sweetly*, and less than ten years later a piece of the same kind is to be found in the *Briefe Discourse* of Ravenscroft (1614) which runs:

"Tobacco fumes away all nastie rheumes."<sup>2</sup>

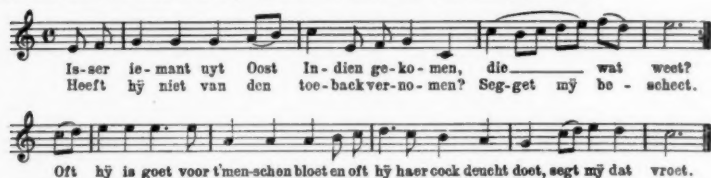
East's madrigal, the only one of these three pieces we have been able to examine, is a pretty *da capo* composition, but of modest allure because of its technic, which is very simple compared to that of many of the other madrigals in the *Second Set*, veritable masterpieces of delicate elegance and refinement. The following passage will give an idea of this vocal quintet's melodic charm:

roc - co, thy search-ing fume ex-hales the rheum, ex- hales the rheum, thy  
roc - co, thy searching fume exhales the rheum,  
— roc - co, thy search - ing fume, thy searching fume ex-  
thy  
roc - co,

<sup>2</sup>See Cox, *English Madrigal in the time of Shakespeare*, London, Dent (1899), p. 252.



Let us now cross the North Sea to Holland, tobacco country *par excellence*. Smoking was introduced to Holland, or more exactly, the Low Countries, which at that time included the Flemish part of Belgium, about 1620 by some English soldiers. Soon the habit became general, but not without resistance, especially on the part of the women-folk, who claimed that tobacco had a disastrous effect on the smokers. An old Dutch song of the seventeenth century, already familiar to some of the readers of this magazine through our study of "Belgian Music and French Music", published in the July, 1923, number<sup>3</sup>, contains several allusions to these disputes. It is the celebrated *Toebaks-lied*, of which here is the first stanza:



Has anybody come from the East Indies who knows anything? Has he not heard of Tobacco? Tell me about it: is it good for men's blood? Does it do them good? Tell me about all that.

The second stanza gives the ladies' point of view:

The women-folk talk venomously about tobacco; they deny it all virtue and unceasingly revile it. They pretend it withers up the men. Is that so? As may be imagined, the subsequent stanzas are devoted to the defense of tobacco by the men, and that in the popular, rough, and naïve manner of the first two. As we remarked above, this song is world-famous. It is less so, in truth, by its words than by its music, which, even up to our time, has enjoyed singular good fortune. The melody of the *Toebaks-lied* is of French origin, and is in effect no other than the court-ballet air: *Est-ce Mars le grand Dieu des alarmes*, published for the first time in Paris in 1613. After the first quarter of the seventeenth century, it became universally known and was

<sup>3</sup>pp. 329 ff. See particularly p. 333.

arranged in different manners. Sweelinck's variations for harpsichord should be mentioned, as well as those of his pupil Samuel Scheidt, and also those of an anonymous English writer who most curiously entitled them *The New Sa-Hoo* (Fitzwilliam Virginal Book). Later the air was wedded to folk-lyrics or songs of nearly folk character. Finally it came back into favor in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gevaert used it as the principal theme in his historic cantata *Jacob van Artevelde* and in the Belgian colonial hymn *Vers l'Avenir*.

\* \* \*

Let us now wander south and see what France, the country of fashion and fine manners, had to say about tobacco. Here there was never a question of anything but snuff. Some verses of a rather trivial tone, published in 1714 in a *Recueil des plus belles Chansons et Airs de Cour*, speak ironically of snuff, however, which would seem to indicate that the habit of taking it was not so general as might be thought:

Ah, la plaisante invention!  
Aussi quel singulier usage  
De voir et filles et garçons  
Prendre à leur entrée en ménage  
Une tabatière en don,  
La faridondaine, la faridondon,  
Qui leur fait perdre leurs esprits,  
Biribi, à la façon de Barbari,

Mon ami!

Oh, what a pretty invention!  
And what a singular custom,  
That both young men and young ladies  
Should accept, on joining their hands,  
A snuff-box as a present!  
And oh-ho and oh-hay and oh-high,  
Which makes them lose all their wits,  
And oh-ho and oh-hay and oh-high,

My friend!

In the second stanza, to take snuff is called 'silly', and in the third and last, the poet (?), who, decidedly, was not a tobacco-fiend, gives a rather unappetizing description of the process:

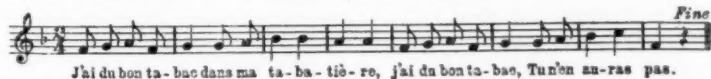
Or donc, pour ne rien vous cacher,  
Son usage est toute une histoire:  
Il faut râper, moucher, cracher,  
Même, pour chercher vos mémoires,  
Faute de mouchoir, ce dit-on,  
La faridondaine, la faridondon,  
L'on prend le mouchoir du pays\*  
Biribi, à la façon de Barbari,

Mon ami!

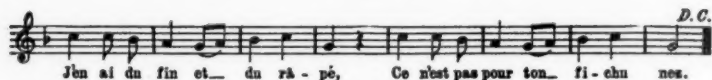
So, to hide nothing from you,  
Taking snuff is quite an affair:  
One must scrape, blow one's nose, spit  
And even, to clear one's head,  
When the kerchief is lacking, 'tis said,  
And oh-ho and oh-hay and oh-high,  
One uses the peasant's handkerchief\*,  
And oh-ho and oh-hay and oh-high,

My friend!

It was very probably the eighteenth century that gave birth to one of the folk-songs most widely known to-day: *J'ai du bon tabac dans ma tabatière*. Every French school-child, and many a one outside of France, knows at least the first stanza:



\*The fingers.



I've some good tobacco in my snuff-box,  
 I've some good tobacco, and you sha'n't have any.  
 I've some powdered and some scraped.  
 It's not for your wretched nose!

The eight couplets that follow are found in numerous collections of folk-songs, but they have entirely gone out of current use.<sup>4</sup> Here again, only snuff is spoken of. And it is snuff alone that plays a part in an older and entirely different work, the *Ballet Royal de l'Impatience*, by Bensérade and Lully, given at the Louvre, February 19th, 1661. This ballet includes an interlude entitled *Le Récit des preneurs de tabac* (The Snuff-takers' Tale). In this divertissement, the "Maestro di Musica" is seen to relate a "récit crottesque" ("crottesque" story) in which "he praises tobacco and, in a jargon, half Italian, half dog-Latin, exhorts his pupils to garnish their nostrils with it. The chorus of *Scolari* punctuates the Master's discourse with joyous refrains."<sup>5</sup>

The sense of humor proper to the author of *Cadmus et Hermione* is given full course in this set of recitatives and choruses (the musicality of which is, by the way, most refined), in which clearly appears all Lully still owed to his native land, before he became the creator of the great French dramatic style. This passage,<sup>6</sup> seasoned with expressive dissonances, in which the *Scolari* voice their invocation to Love with sighs (or perhaps sneezes), is convincing:



(Basso continuo)

<sup>4</sup>See J. B. Weckerlin, *Chansons populaires du Pays de France*, Paris, Heugel, 1903, vol. II, pp. 99 ff.

<sup>5</sup>See Prunières, *L'Opéra Italien en France avant Lully* (Paris, Champion, 1913), p. 264. M. Prunières has reproduced the "Snuff-takers' Tale" in the appendix to his volume (p. 19).

<sup>6</sup>Transcribed in accordance with a modern copy of the *Ballet de l'Impatience*, in possession of the Brussels Conservatory Library. The text reads: "Cruel Love, thou art tobacco and snuff-box unto the heart; but when thou art smelt, thou makest to sigh instead of to sneeze."



Tu sei ta - bac - co et ta-bac-chio-ra al co - ro. Ma,

ma qual ho-ra un ti fin - ti, fa - rà sospiri in - ve - ce di stra -

nu - ti, fa - rà so - spi - ri in - ve - ce di stra - na - ti.

\* \* \*

It would have been contrary to nature had the musicians of Germany, the country of *Gemütlichkeit*, not paid enthusiastic tribute to the peculiar charms of tobacco. And I believe, if the countless books of lieder composed in Germany during the eighteenth century were carefully searched, not a few pieces in praise of the precious plant would come to light. When I think of Papa Haydn, it seems to me that his very nature must have made him extol it. It is hard to imagine him, indeed, without the complement of a golden snuff-box,



the customary present of princes to the great men whose talents they employed. But—perhaps because I have not sought diligently enough—I have not been able to find a trace of anything among his works that smells in the least of tobacco. That formidable bull-dog of the lyric drama, Chevalier Christopher Willibald von Gluck, on the other hand, was credited, in the eighteenth century, with being the author of an arietta in which a lady confesses, in somewhat approximate French, her passion for tobacco:

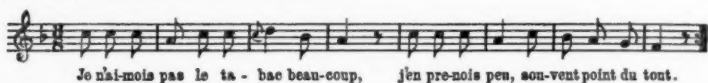
Je n'aimois pas le tabac beaucoup,  
J'en prenois peu, souvent point  
du tout;

Mais mon mari me défend cela.  
Depuis ce moment-là  
Je le trouve piquant,  
Quand j'en veux prendre à l'écart,  
Car il dissipe l'ennui,  
Quoi qu'en dise mon mari.

I didn't care much for tobacco,  
I took but little, often none at  
all;

But my husband forbade me to.  
Since then  
I find it piquant,  
When out of sight I take it,  
For it chases care,  
In spite of what my husband says.

I found this air under Gluck's name in the *Recueil d'Ariettes d'Opéra*, published by Vitzthumb in Bruxelles in 1776-1777 (no. 11, p. 25). It also figures in two of the three versions of Sedaine's comic opera, *Le Diable à Quatre* (1756), the music of which was partly composed by Gluck. M. Wotquenne believes, and rightly, it seems, that it cannot be attributed to the author of *Orpheus*. Be that as it may, the piece is quite harmless, and very *volkstümlich* in character, as the following measures will show:



But even before that, tobacco had made its appearance in the German lied. Georg Philipp Telemann devoted a most curious piece to it in his "*Sing-, Spiel-, und Generalbassübungen*" which dates from the first third of the eighteenth century (1733-34). The Brussels Conservatory Library possesses a copy of this extremely rare book, quaintly engraved, and bearing neither author's name nor date. Telemann's paternity and the date of publication have been carefully ascertained in Max Seiffert's edition of this charming collection (3d Ed., 1927).

This little work is all the more precious because it furnishes examples, in its forty-eight pieces, of thorough-bass worked out according to the custom of the time. In reading it over one is struck by the simplicity with which it is done, and it is impossible, by comparison, not to find certain modern pretreatments of old basses, that are as pedantic as they are clumsily pretentious, entirely out of place.

That the "*Sing-, Spiel-, und Generalbassübungen*" had a pedagogic purpose clearly appears from the texts of the pieces. They take us to school, amongst young pupils who have nothing more to learn about grammar. That accounts for the *Schulmeister* air prevailing from one end to the other of a lied like *Toback* (no. 39-40), which seems naively grotesque to-day, if we do not take into account the atmosphere of an honest little German school of about 1730:

In allen lexicis, in allen wörterbüchern,  
Ist doch kein schöner wort, als der  
toback.

Diss wort erquicket mein gemüte,  
Diss wort verkürzt mir, durch seine  
lange güte  
so manche liebe nacht, wie manchen  
lieben tag.

(*Recitativ*):

Ihr Deutschen herrn grammatici!  
Ihr zehlet den toback mit rechte  
zu den nominibus von männlichem  
geschlechte;

denn der toback gehört nicht vor  
das vieh,

das generis neutrius ist;

auch vor die weiber nicht,

die in dem foeminino stehen;

denn wenn wir auf das genus gehen,

so pflegt er, wie man billig schliesst,

den männern nur allein mit rechte

zu zu kommen;

jedoch die weiber ausgenommen,

die generis communis seyn.

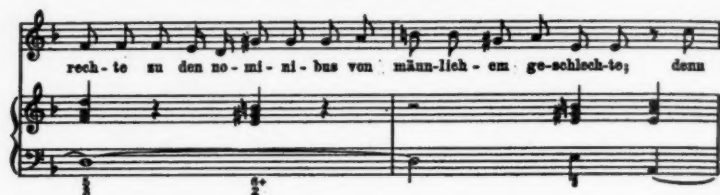
In all the lexicons, in all the dictionaries, there is no finer word than tobacco. That word eases my heart, and its soothing charm makes many long days and nights pass quickly.

(*Recitative*):

You sirs, the German grammarians, you do well to count tobacco among the nouns of masculine gender; for in truth, tobacco has nothing to do with cattle, which are neuter, nor with the ladies, who are feminine; if therefore we consider the gender, we rightly conclude that, in all justice, it (tobacco) belongs to the men; we must, however, except those women who belong to the vulgar gender.

As to the music, it is simple and charming; the following fragment includes the end of the aria and the beginning of the recitative:

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the lyrics "so man-che lie - be nacht, — wie man-chen lie - ben tag." The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the lyrics "Ihr deut-schen herrn gra - ma - ti - ci, ihr zeh-let den to - back mit". The piano part features a simple, rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The vocal line is melodic and easy to sing.



Sperontes<sup>7</sup> celebrated book, *Singende Muse an der Pleisse*, the first part of which was published in 1736, and which met with considerable success, as the many editions published up to 1751 attest, is the first to bring before our minds the picture of the smoker enjoying his pipe and singing the comfort this delightful pastime brings him. The tobacco-lover extols that *Süsse Pannacee* (sweet Panacea) which gives health, wealth, and happiness, and chases away gloom, in two lieder: *Weg, ihr eiteln Grillen*, and *So lange ich meine Tabackspfeife*.<sup>8</sup> They are typical examples of the German *Gemüthlichkeit* that seizes upon tobacco as the ideal mate for the hour of calm and relaxation in the cozy chimney-corner. The spirit of these poems in honor of tobacco-smoking has something very homely about it. Good-natured cheer is not to be despised, especially when it is set forth in music as frankly optimistic as this:



Bey al-lem, was sich mit mir fügt, Ge-sund und man-ter und ver-gnügt.  
So long as I can smoke my pipe whenever I wish and with pleasure, I feel well, and am happy and content with all that comes my way.

It would be unbecoming to brandish the thunderbolts of aesthetical purism at such candor!

\* \* \*

And now for the compositions inspired by coffee. For as much as we know, they are less numerous than those about tobacco; which is not hard to understand, as it is easier to treat of the latter in a burlesque way than to poke fun at coffee. Or will someone say that coffee, as a beverage, is less popular with composers (the majority

<sup>7</sup>The assumed name of Johann Sigismund Scholze (1705-1750).

<sup>8</sup>Nos. 73 and 99 respectively in the magnificent 1747 edition. No. 73 was reedited by R. Wustmann, at the beginning of our century in the collection entitled: *Dreissig Rokoko-Lieder* (Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig). As no. 99 has no music, it must be sung to that of no. 61 (*Preisst, rühmet und lobt nur*).



The Tobacco Pipe

Facsimile of an anonymous piece from an early seventeenth-century manuscript virginal book "Presented by Henry Cook Wells to J. W. Windsor," in the collection of the New York Public Library.

LE CAFÉ, avec accompagnement de piano par M. H. COLET, professeur d'harmonie au Conservatoire.

*Allegro. S*

CHANT. Si vous vou-lez sans pei - ne Vivre en bon-ne san -

PIANO. *p* *Sempre staccato.* *cres.* *cres. Sf*

- té, Sept jours de la se - mai - ne Pre - nez du bon ca - fé, Il

*p* *cres.* *Sf*

vous pré-ser-ve - ra De tou-te ma-la - di - e, Sa ver-tu chasse -

*poco F* *cres.* *p*

- ra, Là, là, Mi - graine et flu - xi - on, Don, don, Rhume et mé-lan-co - li - e.

*p* *Sf* *Fin.*

Procédes de Tantenatou et Cordel, 90, rue de la Harpe.

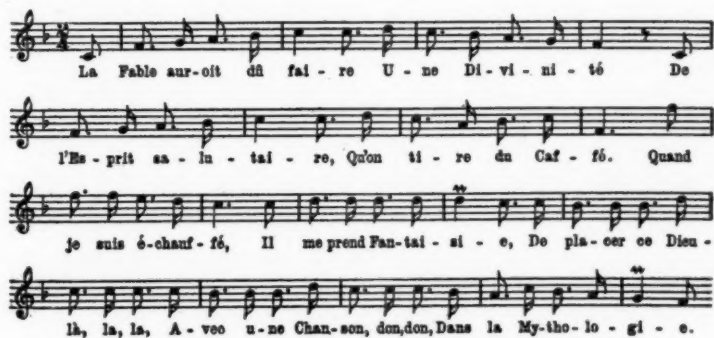
Paris Imp. de F. Lecq, 16, rue N. D. des Victoires.

(See page 374)

of them being men) than Nicot's fragrant weed? Is coffee the proper domain of the ladies? When men have vaunted its delicious aroma and its power to ward off sleepiness, they have about exhausted the matter. Only their helpmates'—occasionally excessive—devotion to the dark infusion, enemy of Morpheus, may become a pretext for verse and music, as it did in that little masterpiece, J. S. Bach's *Kaffee-Kantate*.

Coffee originally came from Arabia and was introduced into occidental Europe by the Venetians, about the same time as tobacco. Its use became general from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards in Italy, France, England, Holland, and Germany. It was a luxury then, and its prohibitive price put it out of the reach of ordinary mortals. The upper classes of society—nobility and the rich bourgeoisie—were alone in the habit of using it, especially in Germany, where Frederick the Great made the importation and sale of coffee a state monopoly. Hence it may be concluded that Lieschen Schlendrian, the sly little coffee-drinker Bach portrays in his *Kaffee-Kantate*, is in no wise a peasant-girl, but nothing less than a well-to-do bourgeoisie, who, by that very fact, is in a position to lay down the law to whosoever desires her in marriage, especially as concerns the promise to allow her to keep on sipping her favorite drink.

As we hinted above, the purely burlesque note can only be the exception so far as coffee is concerned. The only thing of the kind I have found is a most curious French air, published in 1732 in The Hague, by P. Goose and J. Neaulme, in the *Nouveau Recueil de Chansons Choiesies*. It consists of an *Eloge du Caffé*, in nine couplets, followed by a *Réponse contre le Caffé* in eight couplets, sung to the same music, which is of typical Gallic gaiety, with its dotted notes, and its free and easy gait:



La Fable aur-oit dû fai - re U - ne Di - vi - ni - té De  
l'Es - prit sa - lu - tai - re, Qu'on ti - re du Caf - fé. Quand  
je suis é-chauf - fé, Il me prend Fan-tai - si - e, De pla - cer ce Dieu -  
là, là, là, A - vec u - ne Chan-son, don, don, Dans la My-tho - lo - gi - e.



La Fable auroit dû faire  
 Une divinité  
 De l'Esprit Salutaire  
 Qu'on tire du Caffé!  
 Quand je suis échauffé,  
 Il me prend Fantaisie,  
 De placer ce Dieu-là, la, la,  
 Avec une chanson, don, don,  
 Dans la Mythologie.

Fable should have made  
 A divinity  
 Of the Salutory Spirit  
 That one gets from Coffee!  
 When I feel inspired,  
 The fancy takes me  
 To put that God, od, od,  
 With a song, ong, ong,  
 In Mythology.

The general tone of the piece may be seen from this first couplet. The second accentuates the parody in a most typical manner:

La Divine Ambroisie  
 Que Jupin inventa  
 Ce fut Fève choisie  
 Que Vulcan rissola;  
 Momus la mouлина;  
 Pour réjouir la troupe  
 Neptune l'inonda, la, la,  
 Enfin Ganimédon, don, don,  
 La versa dans la coupe.

When Jove invented  
 Divine Ambrosia,  
 It was a choice Bean  
 That Vulcan roasted brown;  
 Momus ground it;  
 To make merry the troupe,  
 Neptune poured water on it, it, it,  
 And finally Ganymede, eed, eed,  
 Poured it into the cup.

After having pleaded for coffee, the song-writer inveighs against it and offers us, in the second couplet of his *Réponse contre le Caffé*, an anticipatory sketch of Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers*:

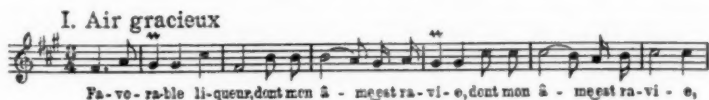
Dans les Enfers, Orphée  
 Entrant fort altéré  
 Gorgonne, mal-coëffée  
 Apporta le caffè.  
 Le Chantre s'écria,  
 Voyant la Liqueur noire:  
 Que me donnez-vous là, la, la,  
 Pour chanter la Chanson, don, don,  
 C'est du vin qu'il faut boire!

When thirsty Orpheus  
 Entered the infernal regions,  
 Touse-headed Gorgon  
 Brought in the coffee.  
 Which black Liquor seeing,  
 The Singer cried out:  
 What's that? at, at,  
 To sing a song, ong, ong,  
 Wine is wanted!

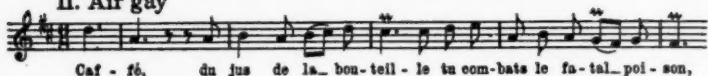
To this rather irreverent piece may be opposed another composition, French too, but this time quite serious and of exquisite musical quality: *Le Caffé*, a cantata by Nicolas Bernier (1664-1734) published in Paris in the *Troisième livre des cantates françoises*<sup>9</sup> of this delightful composer, who belonged to the generation between Lully and Rameau—that of Camppra and Destouches—and who filled different musical posts in the churches of Paris, after a period of formation spent in Italy. The text, very indifferent, is affected and conventional. On pretext of praising coffee, the poet reels off a string of empty and stilted phrases. But the music is infinitely rich. The words are only an excuse for Bernier to write for the human voice as the most bewitching of all instruments. In reality, "Le

<sup>9</sup>This book, published anonymously, bears no date other than that of the *Privilege du Roy* (1703) which was good for fifteen years.

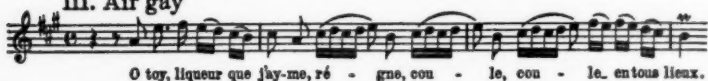




## II. Air gay



## III. Air gay



*Le Caffé* leaves the unmistakable impression of being a truly perfect work of art, a triumph of musical arabesque, traced with rigorously classic order, and yet full of grace and fancy.<sup>10</sup>

\* \*  
\*

Bach's *Kaffee-Kantate* (*Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht*), written some twenty years later (about 1732), does not differ greatly from Bernier's work so far as its musical conception is concerned. Here, too, the structure is, with one exception, composed of a series of *da capo* airs alternating with recitatives. But the literary matter is altogether different. Instead of the cold abstraction of the French cantata, we find a slight plot presented by a narrator as in the oratorio. The libretto is, in Mr. Albert Schweitzer's opinion, the best written by Picander, Bach's principal collaborator. Schlendrian (Father Stick-in-the-Mud) is furious with his daughter Lieschen, because of her fondness for coffee. He wants to forbid her drinking it and threatens to deprive her of a host of agreeable things if she does not give up her passion. But all his efforts are in vain. As a last resort, he forbids her to marry unless she surrenders. This time she gives in; but immediately spreads the rumour that no suitor will be accepted by her unless he first promises to let her drink coffee as much as she pleases. The final chorus—veritable precursor of a comic-opera "vaudeville"—comments on the story, proclaiming jovially that the ladies come by their passion for coffee naturally, and that one might as well try to stop cats from chasing mice as to keep the women-folk from drinking coffee.

The *Kaffee-Kantate* is so well known that we need not enter into detail concerning it. It holds, together with the *Bauern-Kantate*, "*Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet*", a place quite apart among the works of John Sebastian, and it proves that he was capable of portraying, with great good humor not devoid of *finesse*, the many little happenings of every-day life. Doubtless the *da capo* airs seem a bit excessive to

<sup>10</sup>*Le Caffé* was given at one of the concerts of old music organized, at the Exhibition of Belgian Seventeenth Century Art, in 1910, by the Belgian Section of the International Society of Music, with the *continuo* worked out by the author of this article.

express Lieschen's conflicting feelings and those of her scolding father. But we must not judge in accordance with our present aesthetic standards, which do not admit repetition and insistence. There must be an instinctive idea in that process of musical-verbal development resulting from a formal framework based on a nicely balanced symmetry; and that idea, if not in conformity with the practices and realities of life, is nevertheless admirably adapted to express the abstract and permanent elements of a given state of mind. The present case may be likened to that of Racine who, although expressing himself by means of the ultra-conventional French Alexandrine, is nevertheless a hundred times truer to life than are most of the realists of to-day.

We are approaching the end of this study, and there only remains a word to be said about a delightful composition belonging to the last half of the eighteenth century which we had the good fortune to come across. It is a duo that figures in Scene III of the first act of *Les Souliers Mordorés ou la Cordonnière Allemande*, a lyric comedy presented for the first time at the King's Italian Comedians' Theatre, Thursday January 11th, 1776.<sup>11</sup> The author was Alexander Frixer, called Frizeri, whom the score describes as "blind since the Age of one year." Born in Verona in 1741, he died at Antwerp in 1825. The duo: *Oui, je suppose que le nectar qu'on sert aux dieux n'est autre chose que ce Caffé délicieux*, is divided between Baron de Piécourt, captain of dragoons, and Odile, wife of the master-shoemaker Sock, who, one fine evening, brings him a pair of slippers intended for the mythical Baronne de Piécourt. Charmed with pretty Mistress Sock, the Baron makes love to her and proposes that they drink a cup of coffee together. Thus a pretext is found for a duo, not yet of love, but of common admiration for the drink that "enlivens the memory", is "our best doctor", a "sovereign remedy", the "antidote of care".

It would be vain to search in this piece for jewel-like refinement, subtle arabesques, complex and often penetrating harmony, as in Bach's and Bernier's music. It belongs, indeed, to a period of simplification, and, in a certain sense, of democratization, that seeks its pleasure in soft and tender melodic curves, in chords the sweetness of which is not spiced with accumulated dissonances. But in spite of all, there is much grace in this music, a most happy combination of fluent Mozartian Italianism and the freshness and simplicity proper to the eighteenth-century French comic-opera.

<sup>11</sup>The full score of the work was published at the time of its first performance. The duo with which we are concerned was printed separately in Vitzthumb's *Recueil d'Ariettes d'Opéra*, Brussels (1776-77), and there entitled *L'Eloge du Caffé*.

A passage like the following is particularly typical of the distinction and charm of that vocal art.<sup>12</sup>

Odile (Soprano)  
cin. Il faut en boi - re soir et ma - tin, — il faut en boi - re soir et ma -  
Le Baron de Piécourt (Ténor)  
cin. Il faut en boi - re soir et ma - tin, — il faut en boi - re soir et ma -  
Basse continue

tin, — C'est un re - mè-de sou - ve - rain, c'est un re - mè-de sou - ve - rain.  
tin, — C'est un re - mè-de sou - ve - rain, c'est un re - mè-de sou - ve - rain.

If this little excursion along a less frequented bypath of music has achieved nothing else, may it have served to remind some of our gentle readers what debt they owe to those two delectable purveyors of solace and comfort, tobacco and coffee.

(Translated by Safford Cape)

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT: We do not know to what extent this magazine is read in the studios of broadcasting companies. But it has occurred to us that some day, or some night, the directors of the Maxwell House coffee hour or the Lucky Strike cigarette hour might "go historical" and be seized with the desire to give their millions of listeners some real mocha and tobacco music. We are therefore appending, for their benefit, to the charming and erudite article of our Belgian colleague—who clearly stated that he had no idea or intention of exhausting his subject—a few further references to appropriate material.

To the songs about tobacco we might add "A Catch on Tobacco; to be sung by four Men at the time of smoaking their Pipes;" in the Second Book of "The Pleasant Musical Companion" (1686). The text begins:

"Good! good indeed!  
The Herb's good weed;  
Fill thy pipe, Will, and I prithee, Sam, fill,  
For sure we may smoak, and yet sing still;

<sup>12</sup>Version found in Vitzthumb's *Recueil*, transposed one tone lower.

For what say the learned? *Vita fumus,*  
 'Tis what you and I, and he and I, and all of us, *sumus.*"

These smokers were staunch royalists, as is evidenced by the concluding four lines of the text:

"But whether we smoak, or whether we sing,  
 Let's be loyal, and remember the king;  
 Let him live, and let his foes vanish,  
 Thus like a pipe, like a pipe of Spanish."

It was a foregone conclusion that "Wit and Mirth: or Pills to Purge Melancholy" should have contained some verses about tobacco. In the third volume of this collection (1719) we find a song beginning:

"Tobacco is but an *Indian Weed*,  
 Grows green in the Morn, cut down at Eve;  
 It shows our decay,  
 We are but Clay,  
 Think of this and take Tobacco."

The closing stanza, to our way of thinking, is melancholy-provoking rather than purgative. We leave you to judge:

"The Smoak that does so high ascend,  
 Shews you Man's Life must have an end;  
 The Vapour's gone;  
 Man's Life is done,  
 Think of this and take Tobacco."

The "Universal Songster; or, Museum of Mirth" brings in its second volume a song which properly links the pipe with the pot; here is the first of its eight stanzas:

"Some praise taking snuff;  
 And 'tis pleasant enough  
 To those who have got the right knack, O!  
 But give me, my boys,  
 Those exquisite joys,  
 A pot, and a pipe of tobacco."

The sixth stanza offers an observation, the correctness of which is still attested in our day:

"Politicians so wise,  
 All ears and all eyes,  
 For news till their addled pates crack, O!  
 After puzzling their brains,  
 Will not get for their pains  
 The worth of a pipe of tobacco."

In Henry Fielding's "Grub-Street Opera" (1731) there is a song, to be sung to a "Free-Masons Tune," which begins:

"The Soldier for Fame,  
 And a General's Name,  
 In Battles gets many a Thwacko':  
 Let who will have most,  
 Who will rule the roast,  
 Give me but a Pipe of Tobacco."

The "Poetical Note Book" (London, 1824) claims to reprint "from the Low Dutch" a "Hymn" in five stanzas, of which the first is:

"To thee, O Lord! at break of day,  
The incense of my pipe shall rise;  
The butter'd bread, the coffee'd milk,  
Shall be my morning sacrifice."

A note of fine altruism is sounded in the following lines:

"Again, amid my evening prayer,  
To thee shall smoke the fragrant leaf;  
And love of man shall fill my soul,  
And friends partake my pickled beef."

The concluding stanza gives proof of laudable intention and dutiful resolve:

"And when, beneath our eider-down,  
My wife and I repose in glee,  
Oft let it be our serious care  
To give new worshippers to thee."

In Pierre Gaveaux' one-act opera, "Le Petit Matelot" (1796), an air that achieved great popularity is sung to a text that begins:

"Contre les chagrins de la vie,  
On crie et ab hoc et ab hac,  
Moi je me crois digne d'envie,  
Quand j'ai ma pipe de tabac.  
Au jour-d'hui changeant de folie,  
Et d'almanach, je préfère fille jolie,  
Même à la pipe de tabac."

During the prelude or "ritournelle" of this song the stage directions read that the singer "bat le briquet en mesure, allume sa pipe et fume."

About 1800 this song had reached America. It was printed in New York and sold by J. and M. Paff, No. 127 Broadway, as "La Pipe de Tabac. A Favorite French Song with an English Translation", and the first verse reads:

"Hence the face of moping sorrow  
Who would stem the surge of grief,  
Who make fair life's end to-morrow  
In tobacco finds relief.  
What tho this charm of life I prise  
Still Love's nectars sweet to sip  
And gasing on Nan's beauteous eyes  
My pipe forgotten quits the lip."

The sentiments expressed by this song must have met with mild opposition on the part of some other devotees. J. Longman, Clementi & Co. in London (ca. 1800) published Gaveaux' melody as a song entitled "The Dish of Tea, or Ladies Answer to 'Pipe of Tobacco'. The words by a Gentleman, etc." And here are the gentleman's very words:

"Drowsy Mortals time destroying,  
Let in smoke the minutes flee,  
Sweeter 'tis the time employing,  
In a tranquil dish of Tea.  
Rude and strong the foaming liquor,

Smokers drink with noisy glee,  
But good humour passes quicker,  
In a social Dish of Tea.

"Cease, o cease, each face distorting,  
(Swelling cheek and Pouting Lip:)  
Haste where pleasure calmly sporting,  
Blends with mirth the frequent sip.  
And if smoke alone is charming,  
With the Ladies let it be;  
Lovely Vapour care disarming,  
Rising from a Dish of Tea."

This "answer" must have crossed the Atlantic without much delay, as it appeared (also about 1800) in "The Ladies Musical Journal" (No. 10) published by Paff.

The song by Gaveaux, praising the virtues of tobacco, also found its way into Germany. Max Friedländer states that the original French version appeared already in 1797 in the "Journal für Theater und andere schöne Künste" (Hamburg, Vol. 11. No. 3) in a German translation beginning:

"Über die Beschwerden dieses Lebens  
Schwatz so mancher dumme Schnack,  
Mich neckt alle Noth vergebens,  
Hab ich mein Pfeifchen Rauchtak."

In 1804 no less a light than Ludwig Spohr used this same melody in his "Premier Pot-pourri", erroneously attributing the tune to Dalayrac instead of to Gaveaux.

In addition to the two songs cited by Mr. van den Borren from Sperontes' "Singende Muse", that collection, in its first and second continuations, contains three more "tobacco songs". We cannot quote them here in their entirety; they will be easily identified by their first lines, which are as follows:

"Mein Dösgen ist mein Hauptvergnügen" (1st continuation, No. 24)

"Cnaster ist mein Element!" (2nd continuation, No. 42)

"Schnupft, raucht und rücht, ihr Tabacks-Brüder" (2nd continuation, No. 45)

The "Mildheimisches Liederbuch" (1799) contains a "Lied für Tabakraucher" beginning:

"Freund, des Lebens Tage fliehen,  
Nur der heutige ist dein. . ."

and one celebrating the glories of "Caffee" which starts off with a dithyrambic "Caffeechen, Caffeechen, du himmlischer Trank!"

Nor must we forget one version of the celebrated "Lied vom Canapé" (the original of which dates from ca. 1740) combining the praises of that admirable piece of furniture with those of coffee and tea. The first stanza reads:

"Ich mag so gerne Coffee trinken,  
Gewiss, man kann mir mit dem Trank  
Auf eine halbe Meile winken.  
Denn ohne Coffee bin ich krank;  
Doch schmecket mir Coffee und Thee  
Am besten auf dem Canapé."



To Messrs. Strunk and Waters of the Music Division in the Library of Congress we are indebted for their having brought to our attention the "Chanson sur l'usage du café, sur ses propriétés et sur la manière de le bien préparer. Sur l'Air: Les Bourgeois de Chartres, etc." The first of the 24 verses reads:

"Si vous voulez sans peine  
Vivre en bonne santé  
Sept jours de la semaine  
Prenez de bon café."

The song with a piano accompaniment arranged by M. H. Colet, "professeur d'harmonie au Conservatoire," appeared in the third series of *Chants et chansons populaires de la France* (Paris, H. L. Delloye, 1843). The melody is the same as that for the "Eloge du café" and "Réponse contre le café" mentioned by Mr. van den Borren. A "notice" which prefaces the song in the Delloye edition states that it was written in 1711 at the time when coffee first attained its popularity as a drink in France; that it was printed in form of placards, which were hung in public houses, signed and approved by Monsieur de Voyes d'Argenson, head of the police.

For a whole opera dealing with tobacco-smoking,\* we refer the reader to Wolf-Ferrari's "The Secret of Susanna" (1906). We do not remember at the moment any coffee-drinking on the operatic stage, unless Louise and her parents have a cup after their onion soup and *vol-au-vent*; though we have a painful suspicion that here it is a case not of coffee at all but of chicory. And we refuse to be concerned with that.

So much for to-day. Let hardier men take up the pursuit.

There remains nothing but to unite in extending a vote of thanks to Mr. van den Borren for having led the chase, and to conclude the day's hunt with a vigorous intoning—by the full choir—of Mr. Irving Berlin's apt refrain:

"Mister Herbert Hoover  
Says that now's the time to buy,  
So let's have another cup o' coffee  
And let's have another piece o' pie!"

\*Julius Miller (born in 1782, at Dresden) must be the one of whom in 1842 Schilling's "Das Musikalische Europa" reported that "with a better moral character Miller, given his excellent talent, could play one of the leading roles in the world of artists." We take it that he is the one who wrote the words and music for a one-act comic opera entitled "Die Tabakskantate" which was performed at Dresden in 1846. We do not know this work.

## SHAW, WELLS, BINYON— AND MUSIC

By BASIL MAINE

“**W**HAT Mr. Roger Fry calls Art, I call Confectionery.” It is hardly necessary to state who was responsible for that statement. However bold and tantalizing his words may be, Mr. Bernard Shaw is never guilty of saying anything that might have been said by another.

The great value of his observations lies not so much in their truth as in the fact that they cause truth in others. He has a way of pouncing upon a platitude and seizing it with his teeth; then he shakes it violently to prove to us that it is quite dead, if, indeed, it ever was alive. That word ‘confectionery’ startles at first. It seems to be a deliberate taunt. But after a while it occurs to one that the word is only used to pursue and kill once more that dead old fox of a platitude, “Art is a mechanical process.”

Mr. Shaw makes quite certain of the kill this time; the only objection is that he implies that Mr. Fry has been guilty of administering artificial respiration to a fallacy long deceased. In Mr. Fry’s recently published essays on Art, I can find no statement which could be twisted into that fallacy. Here in a few words is the substance of his creed: “I believe that in nearly everyone, wherever a psychological appeal is possible, this is more immediately effective, more poignant than the plastic, but that with prolonged familiarity it tends to evaporate and leave plasticity as a more permanent, less rapidly exhausted, motive force. So that when pictures survive for a long period their plastic appeal tends to count more and more in each succeeding generation.”

This assumption can be taken as a foundation for a theory of all the arts. It has a special application to music. Indeed, it is even more eloquently witnessed by musical than by pictorial compositions. If it is true, for example, that the *Don Juan* of Strauss continues to stir us after a dozen hearings, it is certainly not because of the programmatic basis of the music, for that hardly bears a single repetition. The appeal is made in some way or other through the musical design of the work. The design of a given work may depend upon an intellectual or an emotional process—in *Don Juan* the appeal is chiefly to the emotions—but in either case

we become aware of the quality which for the sake of definition we may call "beauty in design." And it is precisely because the *Alpine Symphony* lacks that co-relation within itself, that significance of formal beauty, that it ceases to hold our attention as soon as we decide that the prospect of an uneventful mountain-climb is an insufficient spur to prick on our purely musical intent. In the same way the failure of a great amount of theatre music to become established in the concert-hall repertory is clearly accounted for; and if you point to Wagner as an exception to this rule, he is so because his music promotes both the intellectual and the emotional processes, and never ceases to interest through the endless series of its mass, line, and colour relations.

Perhaps we shall never be permitted to penetrate the mystery of the relation which is called Beauty with the blunt point of a verbal definition. But we apprehend something of its nature when we realize its effect, which Mr. Fry describes in these words: "Our reaction to works of art is a reaction to a relation and not to sensations or objects or persons or events," and we travel even further when we admit that all aesthetic experience presupposes and is conditioned by this relation. (I am here accepting Professor Abercrombie's definition of aesthetic experience as experience which does not look outside itself for its value). Furthermore, when aesthetic experience is submitted to the process of expression in a work of art, the relationship of the various parts within the experience will find a counterpart in the composition of the work.

It disturbs the poise and natural sequence of events to say that Rembrandt or Dante or Mozart "confected" their works, for this implies artifice, anxious forethought, and a lack of sensitiveness and receptivity, the very qualities which we do not find in an artist. No great work of art has been deliberately confected. It is, in the first place, the result of the orderliness of the artist's experience. That is what we call "vision." In the second place, it is the result of the orderliness of the artist's thought and purpose. That is "inspiration." Finally, it is the result of the orderliness of the artist's work. That is "technique." Inferior music, painting, or literature owes its inferiority to the fact that one or other of these causes is missing. If only the first two are present we get inarticulate works, such as those which Beethoven wrote towards the end of his life; if the last two are present to the exclusion of the first, we get mere "cleverness," such as is found in much of our contemporary music, and in this connexion we may be justified in bringing the odious charge of "confection." It is obviously impossible to find an example in which vision and tech-

nique are present, and inspiration absent, for without purpose there can be no creation in art.

When Mr. Fry emphasizes the element of plastic design in pictures, and gives out that it is ultimately of far greater value than psychological and other incidental considerations, I do not understand him, as Mr. Shaw seems to understand him, to be extolling technique as the greatest gift in an artist. For the element of plasticity is continually recurring throughout the various stages which lead up to the final act of creation. Without it, aesthetic experience is entirely insignificant, seeing that in that case it cannot be distinguished from any other experience.

So then, as I see it, Mr. Fry stands justified in stressing that which is most permanent, and therefore most valuable, in any work of art. And his theory is especially justified by musical experience, for it supplies a fairly satisfactory explanation of the eclipse of some composers and the survival of others. Bach's survival for instance, is not due merely to a high degree of technical attainment. It is due to the fact that Bach's mind, whether in the act of receiving, conceiving, or creating, never failed to exercise its own essential orderliness. He not only thought, but he "experienced" in terms of design and perfect relation. Chaos was a word without meaning to him. And another was Confectionery.

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"In this world of easy-going opinion we are occasionally reminded of the questions which every intelligent man should answer for himself." Mr. H. G. Wells is never tired of discussing these cardinal issues. He is constantly disturbing the public by reviving a number of awkward subjects, and treating them in such a way that we have no alternative but to conclude that all men are hypocrites. Lately he has been allowing the dazzling beam of his mind to play once more upon the subject of vivisection. There is one passage in his essay which may be profitably removed from its context and still retain significance in another application—a process which in itself may be likened to a vivisection experiment. Here is the passage:

"Vivisection is only occasionally and incidentally the infliction of pain, and anti-vivisection is not really a campaign against pain at all. The real campaign is against the thrusting of a scientific probe into mysteries and hidden things which it is felt should either be approached in a state of awe, tenderness, excitement or passion, or else avoided."

Without taking sides about this statement—which, after all, is by no means axiomatic, in spite of the dogmatic form of the expression—it is possible to apply the principles which are implied to the creative impulse in contemporary music. Wherever we look we find the two uncompromising groups: the one consisting of those who are forever probing into mysteries, the other consisting of those who cry, "Let alone; let us see what miracle will happen."

The first group can bring strong arguments for its support. Those who have joined have the courage, not so much of their convictions as of their very beings. They are made that way. They can cite all the great pioneers of the past—Monteverdi, Bach, Beethoven, Wagner—men who were never content to stand in awe, but who were continually experimenting with that which was established, in order—not to disestablish—but to enlarge the establishment. For them the world of sound was not so boundless that it was hopeless to attempt the mapping of its lands and the charting of its seas; or, if indeed it did seem boundless, there was no strong reason why it should not be made finite for the utilitarian purpose of composing music.

The present position is that composers have reached the boundaries which have been prescribed by their forerunners, and are eager to press on to new territory in order to make settlement thereupon. If we fall back again upon the parallel of vivisection, we may say that they have taken the living body of Music, and, having given it an anaesthetic, have subjected it to all manner of dissecting experiments. The whole-tone scale was an experiment upon tonality; the quarter-tone system is an experiment upon "equal temperament"; atonality is an experiment upon the whole face of Music as we have recognized it up till now. Those who take an active part in these experiments, whether it be anaesthetizing or actual surgery, claim that the pain involved is fully justified by the advance which is thereby made in the scientific region of music. The fact that the pain is not a direct infliction upon music itself but an indirect infliction upon those who hear it, does not materially lessen the value of the parallel, since the term "Music" must necessarily include the audience.

Those, on the other hand, who have set themselves against these fearless explorers can bring an equal amount of evidence to support their case. Some base their arguments entirely upon the ground that any music which causes a discomforting auditory sensation is at once excluded from the literal meaning of the term "Music". Others—and these have the stronger position—give out that music which is purely the result of experiment is of no

value whatever. These are the real anti-vivisectionists. They are old-fashioned enough to believe in inspiration, and in the light of their belief they hold that the wide, feverish, complex activity which we are pleased to call Contemporary Music can be summed up by the single word "Expiration". It is so much waste of breath, they would say, and would give as their reason that the composer of to-day is unwilling to wait for the silence through which music can be distilled into his spiritual ear. He must be eternally analysing, contriving, projecting; he must also be continually explaining himself, lest there should be the slightest error in future experiments along the same line. And if they would make their argument more complete the anti-vivisectionists could make great play with the documentary evidence contained in the letter written by Alban Berg to his master Schönberg, explaining the nature of a composition which the pupil had written to honour his master's fiftieth birthday. When the blind must lead the blind, how exceeding great is the darkness!

This conflict between those who insist upon the emotional nature of music and those who insist upon its essentially intellectual nature has not arisen for the first time. But the contention has never been so acute as at the present time, and it is surprising to find how few are the members of the musical public who have definitely made up their minds on the point. It is all the more surprising when we realize the simplicity and clarity of the issue. Mr. Wells with his "let's-have-no-nonsense-about-it" manner has expressed it admirably in these words: "The world that the provivisectionist is by his nature compelled to strip bare, the anti-vivisectionist clothes in rich swathings of feeling and self-protection."

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Not long ago Mr. Laurence Binyon contributed to a musical paper an article which was in the nature of a confession. In the article the sentence occurred: "Expression in music is less conditioned by material (is it not? I speak in ignorance) than in the other arts." A writer in the *Manchester Guardian* was prompted by this observation to write as follows:

The solemn truth is that composers of the present time are fretting in large numbers at the peculiar tyranny exercised over them by music's material, its "sounding air". Because music is a unique language, because so far it has lived mainly in a world beyond words, it has been driven to seek intelligibility by cultivating abstract form to a point that might easily breed art much too good for human nature's daily food.



Then he goes on to hold out a hope for the human-all-too-human composer—for him who desires to establish a definite relationship between his art and the common round of daily life. He uses such phrases as “a means of escape from an air that is rather too divine, from an ether that is much too ample,” to reveal without shame his radical heart. The end of the argument is concerned with an attempt to show that speech and music are alike in this, that both are based upon an arbitrary connexion between ideas and their expression. But the reasoning is a little too good to be true; it is not quite so easy as that. Or perhaps it would be more to the point to say that it ought not to be so easy; for the sterility of so much contemporary music is undoubtedly due to the fact that composers have no courage to try their wings in that “too ample ether,” and are content to subject their art to a utilitarian and platitudinizing process. To say that there is a danger of music becoming “much too good” for daily consumption is to utter two falsities in a single breath. The statement implies that music is a commodity which must be delivered, prepared, and served at regular intervals for human sustenance; whereas, in point of fact, we know that most of us are naturally too delicate to be able to make a hearty meal at every sound of the concert-agent’s dinner-gong. It also implies that the intrinsic value of music is to be judged by a subjective rather than an objective process. We have arrived at a sorry state of affairs when a musical work is to be condemned because “we, you, or they” are not in a position to enumerate it among the real necessities of life.

When the *Manchester Guardian* contributor writes that composers have been driven to seek intelligibility through abstract form, because music happens to be an idiomatic language, he is guilty of redundancy, and a certain amount of perversion. We gain no enlightenment from the statement that an archangel is an archangelic being, and are rather confused when we are told that an archangel has been driven to seek his present state because of his archangelic qualities. One would have thought it unnecessary to declare what has been obvious from the beginnings of music—from the very time when primitive man beat his drum in fear or wailed to express his exceeding joy—that music, being beyond all verbal utterance, sought its own means of expression—was not driven to do so, but did so gladly and of its own free will. And when we finally arrive at what is known as “sonata form,” it is clear that the composers who used that form did not use it *faute de mieux*, but because it was a natural growth from all that had gone before. Therefore this alleged fretting of contemporary composers under



the yoke of abstraction is to be taken as a sign not of health and vigour, but of decadence. For we do wrong to associate decadence always with inertia; feverish reaction can lead men just as surely to a dying fall. We live in an age which is protesting so vehemently against false sentiment that expression in all the arts has become strident and insolent. The *Manchester Guardian* writer applauds the *Domestic Symphony* of Strauss because it dares to speak of earthly things in a human and suburban way. And, I imagine, he would equally applaud the younger men (say, Poulenc, Auric, Milhaud, and the rest) for their elaborate and expensive fun. Even Ravel and Debussy, because they have cared for the intangible things and for elegant expression, have already become back numbers, to give room for these dare-devils. On every side we hear works of music being praised and advocated because of some new vaulting ambition—because of what they have attempted to express, hardly ever because of the success of the venture.

The desire to formulate the language of music so that it can be compiled in a kind of dictionary is as wrong-headed as it is futile. When we hear the chord of the ninth defined as “any Tristan making love to any Isolde,” we may suspect an overstrained sense of humour. A word calls up an image through long association and through a crying human need; there is nothing arbitrary in the connexion between the thing “egg” and the word “egg”; but what is this wild notion of chaining (even in jest) a chord or a whole phrase to a definite image or sensation? Music is as free as the air—“the sounding air” which is its material. Mr. Binyon suggested that expression in music is less conditioned by material than in the other arts. It would be more nearly true to say that musical expression is less dependent than the other arts upon the laws of association. Music is conditioned by its material as fully and literally as poetry; but whereas poetry uses the most direct vehicle of human intercourse, music uses a more remote and extensive medium. There may be room for a greater liberty in employing this medium, but there is also room for a greater license; and in this we may find one of the many reasons why it is more difficult to give a final judgment upon a musical than upon a poetic composition.

Criticism, whether of music or poetry, seeks first of all for motive. The motive for poetic utterance, however obscured it may be by mannerism, philosophic irrelevance, fantasy or arabesque, is comparatively easy to discover; but in music not only is it less tangible but often quite incomprehensible to certain types of contemporary criticism. It is not reasonable, for instance, to

expect English critics to appraise the work of Schönberg, whose motives are so hedged round about by his own problematic personality. And it is because the material of music is so nebulous that the conditioning of music is so limitless and so exposed to vandalism. In the midst of the vast endless sea of musical expression the only hope is to throw out the anchor of innocence and recover that blessed state of mind which Yeats has described as 'all knowledge lost in trance of sweeter ignorance.'

## CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI OF CREMONA

By G. FRANCESCO MALIPIERO

IN the last fifty years Italian, French and German historians, rummaging in the archives of Mantua, Cremona, Venice, and Parma, have been able to reconstruct the life of Claudio Monteverdi, and they are still putting together bits of gleanings in their endeavor to curb imagination and avoid inaccuracies. But only in his works may the true life of a great artist be revealed; and those of Monteverdi are for the most part unknown or heard in performances which do not do them justice. So far we have been content to speak of him rather platonically. We have several of his letters, from which we learn that at Mantua he was obliged to fight for the meagre stipend assigned him by the Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, that the climate did not agree with him, that he concerned himself with alchemy, and many other details of his daily life; but these are small matters over against the compositions he has left us. And of these one only, "Ariadne's Lament", has prevented us from completely forgetting the most famous composer of the seventeenth century!

"*Lasciatemi morire*"—"Let me die": never has the world been more touchingly implored. Yet it has made every effort to let die not only Ariadne, but all of Monteverdi's creations; and in certain recent republications of his compositions his exhumators, overcome by emotion, seem to have endeavored to still the voice of the divine Claudio forever.

Giovanni Battista Doni unhesitatingly affirmed that "Ariadne's Lament" is "perhaps the most beautiful composition of its kind [operatic] ever written," and regrets that Monteverdi "arranged it in the form of a madrigal." "How much better it would have been," he says, "had that Venetian gentleman [Girolamo Mocenigo, protector of Monteverdi] made him set this Lament, the true jewel among all his compositions, with a concert of four instruments, the best possible manner of accompanying this beautiful aria for a solo voice."

So wrote Doni in 1640, thirty-two years after the first presentation, which took place in 1608, in Mantua, on the occasion of the royal marriage of His Serene Highness, the Duke Francesco

Gonzaga, with Her Serene Highness, the Infanta Margherita di Savoia. A contemporary, Follino, describing these festivities, mentions *Arianna* and the impression it produced on the audience:

But there being added [to the tragedy of Rinuccini] the powerful Music of Signor Claudio Monteverdi (choir-master of the Duke, a man whose value the world knows, and who in this case gave proof of outdoing himself), besides the Concert of voices, the harmony of the instruments, located behind the Scenes, always accompanying the singer and varying their sound according to the music: and being performed by men as well as by women, who excelled in the art of singing; it succeeded in every part most admirably, especially in the lament of Ariadne, abandoned on a reef by Theseus, which was delivered with so much feeling, in such a piteous way, that no listener could be found who was not touched, no lady who did not let fall a few tears at Ariadne's beautiful complaint.

The genius of Monteverdi rapidly imposed itself, though the theorists tried to contest his way to success.<sup>1</sup> The insidious criticisms of the bilious Artusi were read but remained ineffective. In 1600 (in his *Imperfections of Modern Music*) he tried to demolish Monteverdi, after examining some of the Madrigals of the Fifth Book:

The pattern is not ungrateful though it introduces new rules, new modes, new forms of expression, which are sharp, not pleasing to the ear, and they never can be otherwise, as they transgress the good Rules, which are partly founded on experience, Mother of all things: partly upon Nature's speculation: and partly upon proved demonstration; so we must believe that the innovations are deformities of the nature and properties of true Harmony, and far from the goal of music which is delectation. They are contrary to what is good, what is beautiful in the institution of harmony; they are sharp to the ear and offend rather than please. . . . They produce confusion and imperfection of no little importance.

These lines might be mistaken for an excerpt from some twentieth-century journal. But in Monteverdi's time the envious did not have fair game, because every Italian province was a center of culture and consequently provincialism did not exist. In those days artists did not make fools of themselves, and even the less intelligent critics did not circulate prejudiced views on the aims of music. Princes, dukes, kings, emperors vied with each other to attract artists to their courts, where there was no public to judge (justice functioned only to punish criminals of a very different kind) but a select assemblage of persons capable of *listening* in order to comprehend and admire.

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<sup>1</sup>It was natural that there should have been singing-teachers among the adversaries of Monteverdi. In his *Regole Utilissime per gli Scolari che Desiderano Imparare a Cantare* (1606), Antonio Brunelli takes issue with the recent innovations introduced by him. Monteverdi certainly knew more of the art of singing than those who professed it for a living, as is proved by a letter to the Duke of Mantua (June 9th, 1610) in which he describes the faults and virtues "of a certain contralto from Modena" who was supposed to enter the Duke's services.

Adriano Banchieri, the Olivetan composer-monk, was a sincere admirer of Monteverdi and, though born one hundred and fifty years before Padre Martini, it is perhaps due to this devotion that Martini, who had many points of contact with Banchieri, shows his comprehension and appreciation of Monteverdi's works. He is an exception, because Monteverdi's compositions, if not his fame, fell into oblivion soon after his death, and his name appeared from time to time only in treatises, especially those which discussed dissonance. Only twenty-five years had passed since the death of Monteverdi, when Giovanni Maria Bononcini expressed himself thus in his *Musico Pratico* (1678), citing the master of dissonance:

Some parts being in dissonances, the others must accord with them, if they are not to express an effect of great hardness, as Claudio Monteverdi did in the Madrigal 'O Mirtillo' under the words 'crudelissima Amarilli'.

After the posthumous publication of the "Ninth Book of Madrigals" in 1651, no other work of Monteverdi was published or reprinted for over a hundred years. Padre Martini himself was the first to reprint certain pages. In his *Esemplare ossia Saggio Fondamentale Pratico di Contrappunto Fugato* (1775) he published two of the most discussed madrigals, "Stracciami pure il cuore" and "Cruda Amarilli", and an *Agnus Dei*, and it is to his credit if the majority of Monteverdi's works are to be found in the library of the Liceo Musicale in Bologna. He collected them in the monastery of San Giacomo. In the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, the excavator of musical treasures did not yet exist; music was in full bloom, though showing signs of decline, and the works of living composers sufficed to satiate the voracious lovers of the art. It is natural, then, that Monteverdi should have been one of the most neglected of the great composers, for even if his works were printed and reprinted during his lifetime, only a few copies could have survived destruction; nearly all were worn by frequent use. In those days no scores were printed, only the separate parts: wherefore the nineteenth-century treasure-seekers, having neither the means nor the energy to "newly bring to light" all the works of the divine Claudio, carefully avoided the fatigue of reconstructing the scores from which to choose what they would publish. So it is by an accident of a material sort that they deprived Italian art for three centuries of one of its greatest figures—the only composer among them who, by a queer irony, could himself boast the title of excavator, having printed in 1627, half a century after the death of the author, the madrigals of Arcadelt.

It is a miracle that nearly the entire collection of the printed works (only three parts of the *Madrigali Spirituali* for four voices are missing) and two manuscripts have been saved; for it seems as if only Monteverdi's name had been predestined to immortality, like that of a legendary hero. Notwithstanding his glorious life and the pomp of his funeral, his mortal remains have never been recovered because they lie in the public tomb of the Chapel of Sant' Ambrogio in the "dei Frari" Church, where all Lombards who died in Venice in those days were buried.

All Monteverdi's portraits are lost, save the one by an unknown engraver published in Marinoni's *Fiori Poetici* in 1644, here reproduced. The fate of the others is not known, not even that of the one by Strozzi, the Genoese painter, which Boschini praises in his *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco*.

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It was quite by chance that in the middle of the nineteenth century Italy began to talk again of Claudio Monteverdi. Francesco Caffi, composer and writer on musical subjects, following the example of other Venetian historians intent upon exalting the virtues of their defunct Republic, wrote and published (1854) a *Storia della musica sacra nella già cappella ducale di San Marco in Venezia*. In this history Caffi could not help paying some attention to Monteverdi, and it is due to his researches (probably without his suspecting it) that the name of Monteverdi, who succeeded the insignificant Giulio Cesare Martinengo, at last came to occupy one of the most important places among those of the masters who served *la Serenissima Repubblica*.

Caffi, being a good Venetian, published the decree of Monteverdi's nomination to the ducal chapel (August 19th, 1613) and other documents that give magnificent proof of the wisdom of the Procurators of San Marco. The decree reads:

Inquiring from Ambassadors and Residents of Venice concerning subjects qualified for this profession, we understand from their answers that the person of Claudio Monteverdi, Chapel Master of Duke Vincenzo and Duke Francesco of Mantua, is recommended as the principal subject about whose qualities and virtues these illustrious gentlemen are most confirmed in their opinion, as also about his printed works, and those which these illustrious gentlemen have now succeeded in hearing performed to their total satisfaction in the Church of San Marco by the musicians of the same, etc., etc.

And Caffi goes on to say:

His election was accompanied by uncommon signs of distinction. He was presented with fifty gold ducats as remuneration for expenses incurred during his trip: the rectory assigned to him as his dwelling was restored and conveniently



adapted to his needs. And this is not all; furthermore, the salary of two hundred ducats until then paid to his predecessors was augmented by one hundred more: three years later (August 24, 1616) when his three-year contract expired, it was increased to four hundred gold ducats with the words: 'so that he may have the opportunity to resolve that he shall live and die in this service.' And furthermore, on October 9th, 1629, he received a present of 100 scudi: and of 100 ducats on December 14th, 1642.

Describing all that the shrewd Procuratori of San Marco did to fetter great artists with chains of gold, Caffi justly exalts the greatness of the Venetian Republic; but when he says that "Claudio Monteverdi was the Rossini of three centuries ago," and that "his merit was extreme considering the period in which he lived," he shows that he had no clear conception of musical conditions in the seventeenth century and was not aware that they corresponded to political conditions.

Nearly all the Italian nineteenth-century writers of musical history after Caffi—Abate Canal, Bertolotti, Ademollo, Davari, Solerti—were more interested in collecting documents than in the rebirth of Italian music, and they accorded Monteverdi a special place not for his works, which, indeed, they did not know at all, but on account of his "historical importance". Even Sommi Picenardi, to whom we are indebted for information on the civil status of the whole Monteverdi family, on the first page of his study of Monteverdi (1895) makes us realize the futility of his efforts when he says:

Claudio Monteverdi, a genius superior to his time, born in an epoch in which music was bound by pedantic rules that hindered its progress, excelled all his predecessors and contemporaries, and with his innovations, with the invention of that which is called modern tonality, opened to art a new period of glory, greatly to the benefit of the present century.

We may imagine with what enthusiasm the author of this appreciation applauded that other Cremonese, Amilcare Ponchielli, only one of whose numerous operas (*La Gioconda*) ever found its way outside of Italy!

It was only after the war that two Frenchmen, Louis Schneider and Henry Prunières, discovered that books about Monteverdi might be of great importance in the history of music. Prunières very well describes Monteverdi's life, always adhering to autobiographical episodes given in the letters in the Mantuan archives or in other documents discovered by the Italian scholars of the past century already mentioned and relating to court life in Mantua and Venice. But the Court of Mantua has a history too vast to be summed up in an account of the twenty years that Monteverdi lived there, and it is even more difficult to detach the per-



sonality of an artist from the background of the long and vivid history of the Venetian Republic. Better to leave biography enveloped in a fog of legend: and this is especially true of Monteverdi, who, child of his time though he was, lived before his time, as do almost all great composers.

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The very odd poems Monteverdi set to music suffice to prove that, however much imbued with the "seconda pratica",<sup>2</sup> his musical expression was always at its best when independent, not when following "the argument of the text"; the *Combattimento di Trancredi e Clorinda*, where he humbly submits himself to the poem of Tasso, is an exception. In the Petrarch sonnet ("Hor che'l ciel e la terra") he does not succeed in this, because the verse "guerra è il mio stato" offers him a pretext for the ample development of a heroic theme, which has nothing Petrarchal about it, but which is sufficient to justify the publication of this sonnet in the *Madrigali Guerrieri* of the Eighth Book. Sometimes an inadequacy in the words breaks the line of his song, as in the marvellous lament of Orpheus which is cut in two by the doubtful insipidity of "che se i versi alcuna cosa ponno."

Monteverdi frequently repeats verses—like "tu se' il mio core," "mi trassero dal core," "non m'è grave morire," etc.—without making the equivalent repetition in the music. On the other hand, certain musical episodes that recur very often nearly always first appeared in some one of the most perfect masterpieces, like the themes of the madrigal "Ecco mormorar l'onde" (Second Book) which may be found even in the last works. The musical phrase of the famous "Lasciatemi morire" is repeated, identical even to the harmony, in the *Ballo delle Ingrate* at the words "Oh miserelle." Here, too, reappears the deeply affecting finale of Orpheus' lament: "a Dio terra, a Dio cielo, e sole a Dio," in the plaint of one of the "Ingrate" obliged to return to the Inferno. This repeating himself is not a sign of weakness in Monteverdi but the proof of a prepotent personality.

Although biographers are convinced that after the death of his wife Monteverdi led a chaste life (love-letters, properly enough, not having come to roost in the State archives upon which they rely), there is no composer more sensual. Most of his music is extremely sensual, and often the verses he selects to put to music are lascivious. But how should we know the true story of Monte-

<sup>2</sup>So Monteverdi called his second manner, in which he went counter to the rules of Zarlino and Co.



Engraved title-page of "Fiori Poetici", a collection of memorial poems written on the occasion of Monteverdi's obsequies; the master's portrait at the top of the page is the only one extant.



Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga, his son, Eleonora of Austria, and Eleonora de' Medici, by Rubens.

(In the Accademia Virgiliana, Mantua)

verdi's secret loves? It may even be that memory and sorrow at the loss of his Claudia pursued him to his dying day, and that he confided the torments of contained passion to his music, so that all his works, even those of his last years, seem to have been conceived in the exuberance of youth. The anguish, the melancholy, the nostalgia, the joy serene and orgiastic, the accents heroic and pathetic, which alternate in Monteverdi's works, making the most effective contrasts of expression, all contributed to the creation of masterpieces, and perhaps it is more reverent not to violate the secret of their origins.

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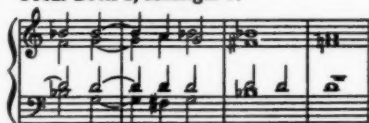
All the marvels of Monteverdi's art, in harmony as in song, were born of a soul tormented, greedy for novelty but not disdaining to follow with manifest interest the whole evolution of European music. His trip to Hungary in 1595, notwithstanding the battles at which he was present, had perhaps less influence on his heroic music (*Il Combattimento*, etc.) than on the character of certain of his melodies, to which he gave a slightly Slavic and slightly Oriental coloring. Similarly, after reading and hearing the new French music during his journey to Flanders in 1599, he wrote some compositions "alla francese," declaring the fact openly. He never stooped to petty imitation but enriched with new means of expression his already fertile "forge of sound."

From the very first book of Madrigals we are aware of the greatness of the innovator dominated by the fascination of harmony and of popular song. Here "vaporous and opalescent" harmonies abound which would do justice even to a contemporary of Debussy:

From Book I, Madrigal 4.



From Book I, Madrigal 5.



The harmonic surprises in the first six books of the madrigals and in *Orfeo* are too numerous to cite, the more so as the most daring often derive from the absolute independence of the parts. The Italian polyphonists of the sixteenth century, Palestrina included, tempered the contrapuntal rules definitively promulgated by

Zarlino in his treatises. Monteverdi, nowise surrendering the infinite resources of intuition, chose to follow the theories of Nicola Vicentino (*L'Antica Musica ridotta alla Moderna Pratica*), but it may not on this account be said that he "disposed the parts badly"! In the nineteenth century—when counterpoint was taught à la Cherubini—he was accused of being a weak contrapuntist. But Monteverdi created various masterpieces in the purest polyphonic style, proving himself an able contrapuntist, and it matters little if he did not follow in the footsteps of the Zarlínists. In adopting new harmonic procedures and simplifying counterpoint he sought, not to avoid difficulties, but to enlarge his own horizon.

He often uses a leap of a diminished fifth:

From Book IV, Madrigal 9.



or an augmented second:

From Book IV, Madrigal 4.



and if he sometimes fails to avoid forbidden fifths and parallel octaves, he does so to preserve the noble and vigorous line of the parts. He could, of course, have pleased his critics had he been an arid academician instead of an innovator, and had he taken cognizance of the fact that two centuries after his death the laws of counterpoint would be dictated by that very Luigi Cherubini who reduced the style to a mere scholastic exercise that had nothing to do with the true art of the great polyphonists.

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There is no denying that in the first books of the madrigals we already encounter the germ of the "seconda pratica", for, especially in the most pathetic, there is always one part that "sings", and if the predominating theme winds from one voice to another, Monteverdi has it do so in order to obtain particular color effects. The difference between the first and second manners of Monteverdi is enormous; in no other art could two such contrasting styles be found in the same man. Monteverdi is Giotto and Paolo Veronese in one, Mino da Fiesole and Bernino.

To-day, fascinated by their daring harmonies, we find the works of the first manner the more perfect and more modern; but anyone who would deplore as symptoms of decadence in the second manner the harmonic sobriety, the frequent progressions, the long passages in thirds or sixths, the too common cadences, forgets that most of these highly original inventions have now been exploited for two full centuries by all composers because Monteverdi, in simplifying musical technique, smoothed for all and sundry the path of melo-dramatic improvisation. In his own works the diatonic style, the progressions, the tuneful cadences are still virgin material, sprung from the fantasy of an insatiable innovator. Intoxicated with the effect of gyrating for eight or more measures around tonic or dominant, he could not have imagined that, like the good alchemist he was, he was filtering a potent poison which only two centuries later would have wrought the destruction of harmony.

Nor should the lack of flats and sharps in the keys of his choice be judged a limitation (nearly all his works are in F or C and their relative minors). For in those days singers transposed compositions when necessary, according to their ranges, into a higher or lower key. Monteverdi sought harmonic variety within the key, rather than by excessive modulation. Frequent change of tonality came into use later to camouflage harmonic monotony.

Monteverdi might be called the forerunner of all the great composers, even of those who failed of his direct influence because they were born when he had already been forgotten. In his compositions there are fragments, themes, harmonic progressions, rhythms that might have been written by Bach, Beethoven (in the Eighth Madrigal of the Sixth Book there is an entire Beethovenian passage), Chopin, or Domenico Scarlatti—the last-named, surprising as it may seem, having been the connecting link between Monteverdi and the music of the eighteenth century and of the romantics.

But in discovering these relationships we must not attempt to reduce to such material points the spiritual bonds between composers of the past and those of the future. The evolution of musical language obeys laws that do not depend upon the individual wills predestined to create those masterworks which the fickleness of fashion cannot condemn to ephemeral life or to oblivion.

In the *Combattimento* Monteverdi warns the performers that:

The voicing of the text should be clear, steady and of good enunciation, somewhat removed from the instruments, and so as to be better understood in the delivery, NO FLOURISHES OR TRILLS SHOULD BE INSERTED in any



other place but only in singing the stanza that begins 'night'; the rest will be emphasized according to the passion of the delivery.

He wrote neither flourishes nor trills, and perhaps grudgingly conceded that they might be introduced in the place mentioned only because he had at last to submit to the exigencies of one of *his own* creations, *bel-canto*. But unfortunately, in insisting upon the repetition of words and according prominence to the voice, if only to underline "the passion of the delivery" (i.e. expressiveness of the text), he helped to transform this expressiveness into expressiveness of the voice only and to the detriment of the delivery, the more so as his instrumental music is always inferior and subordinate to his vocal music.

In nearly all his works he warns that "the instruments should be played in imitation of the meaning of the text," and indeed, when confided to the strings alone, the desired instrumental coloring is almost unrealizable. The instructions, which are vague but interesting—"here enter the trombones, cornets, hand-organs" or "the other parts to be played by three *viola da braccio*, and a *contrabasso* to be touched very softly"—are always found where the emotion to be expressed does not correspond with the actually available music, which in the main is completely written out in certain instrumental parts only (the *chitarrone* and *clavicembali* having only a figured bass that had to be realized).

His ideas and intentions with regard to the orchestra are evident (in the strings he introduced *pizzicati*, special bowings, and the famous *tremolo*, which aroused the hilarity of the players when they were obliged "to shake a cord sixteen times in a single bar"); but perhaps just because he did consider the instrumental expression less important, he took less care with it than with the voices, and often it is clearly neglected. All this notwithstanding, he is a symphonist: his vocal works, especially those for five or more voices, are true symphonies and often make us long to replace the voices with instruments. To cite a single example, the last madrigal in the Second Book, "*Cantai un tempo*", is admirable, but would perhaps seem more perfect if four violas and a cello took the places of the five voices. In the graceful instrumental *ritornelli* and symphonies of *Orfeo*, which fill the pauses and recall "the passion of the delivery" until they are almost leading motives, Monteverdi does not succeed in equalling the ample phrases of his symphonic vocal writing, or in freeing himself from progressions, cadences, and all the things which paralyze the musical period instead of giving it a more expansive breath. In instrumental



music Monteverdi is inferior to many other composers, even to Gabrieli, while in vocal music his genius never deserts him.

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His religious compositions were written in both styles: in the severe contrapuntal manner of the "prima pratica",<sup>3</sup> which constrains him to submit to the discipline of his contemporaries, and in the "seconda pratica", which permits him to abandon himself to the secular lyricism we see in the religious pictures of the sixteenth-century Venetian masters, who were not profaning religion but living in the religion of their art.

It was not by simple chance, then, that Monteverdi changed the text of "Ariadne's Lament" to the "Plaint of the Madonna". If sorrow over the death of his wife inspired the one, it may also have been used to express the Madonna's grief at the death of her son; the role of music being not to affirm the quality of a feeling, but to intensify the expression just because it is undefined. Hence the absurdity of program music.

Monteverdi often changed the words, turning a secular composition into a religious one. But here, let alone the question of the profanation of art, he contradicts himself: if, as he desires, music should be slave to the word, how can the same music adapt itself to two different poems?

From his early days he was always preoccupied with achieving the utmost degree of expressiveness, and did not bother to create new forms<sup>4</sup> in religious or theatrical music or in the madrigal. He wanted to express only the human passions, and in doing so he is never either too conventional or too extreme, although he believes he is following the poem—whether it be conventional or extreme or not—with doglike fidelity, and imagines himself remaining loyal to those esthetic principles which he would like applied to every case. He did not belong to the Florentine "Camerata", and did not concern himself with the rebirth of Greek tragedy, but he brought to the point of reality what Count di Bardi's friends had scarcely glimpsed.

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The groups of three, four, or even five madrigals of the first six books, held together by the poetic arguments, are little melodramas. In some of the madrigals there are already indications, though primitive, of the cantata.

<sup>3</sup>These, even counting those that are said to have been lost, represent but a small part of his output.

<sup>4</sup>Yet it is no partisan exaggeration to find in his works, though still embryonically, the theme with variations, as the "Romanesca" of the *Seventh Book* shows.

All the compositions in the "seconda pratica" are dramatic, and the melodramas are really sequences of cantatas and madrigals. Of all his operas, *Orfeo* (1607) is the one that comes nearest to the drama as represented by the Florentines. We do not know the music of *Proserpina Rapita* (1630) written on the occasion of the Mocenigo-Giustiniani nuptials, to the plot of Giulio Strozzi, nor that of the *Finta Pazza Licori*, also by Strozzi. The scores of *Adone* (1640) and of the *Nozze d'Enea con Lavinia* (1641) are also lost. The ballet *La Vittoria d'Amore* was written in the same year as the latter, for the Duke of Parma.

In 1641, too, three of Monteverdi's works were presented in Venice. The third was the *Ritorno di Ulisse in patria*, of which a manuscript exists in the State Library in Vienna. It is possible that these melodramas were written in a hurry; but even if we attribute the faults we find in *Ulisse* to overhasty production, in many pages of this work the "divine Claudio" is not recognizable at all. And why is it that the libretto in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice does not correspond with the manuscript in Vienna?

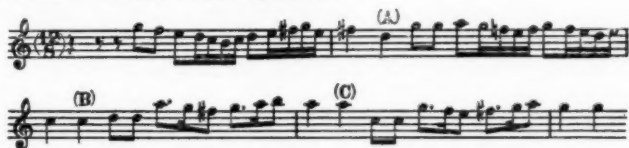
The melodramatic cycle closes with the *Incoronazione di Poppea*, the second masterpiece of Monteverdi, and his swansong. The plot is a drama free of the ridiculous situations of the average opera libretto. The action is concise, and the poet has avoided the awkwardness of verses written for music. This work and *Orfeo* are the strongest pillars of Italian music-drama.

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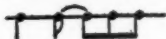
In publishing the works of Claudio Monteverdi there are only two things to bear in mind: To forget all that has been done after him and to give up the illusion that there has been any progress since the seventeenth century.

It is unnecessary, for instance, to change the disposition of the measures, shifting the bar-lines, because in the seventeenth century it had not yet been established that the accented and unaccented beats should fall consistently in certain parts of the measure. Measures were only a conventional graphic division, and strong and weak beats were adapted to the rhythm of the words; proof of this being that when the voices answer each other in imitation, there would be nothing gained by redistributing the bar-lines, for a shift made to remove an apparent (and wrong)

stress in one part would only produce one in another.<sup>5</sup> There has recently been published a study of four bars of one of the *ritornelli* from *Orfeo* and in it are discussed the various interpretations by modern editors of the rhythm in which the passage is written. Monteverdi wrote the ritornello with mathematical precision, in twelve-eighths, but the characteristic accents of the theme itself fall in such a way, each eighth having its full and proper value as an eighth, as to create a syncopation:



[between the third and fourth eighths of the second (A), third (B), and fourth (C) measures] which to-day would be written:



but which may still be written as Monteverdi wrote it—if we may make so bold as to dispute the indisputable and correct an error that was never committed.

As certain aristocratic families search among old documents for new titles to nobility, so, if we to-day evoke the annals of music history, we find that Monteverdi more than vindicates the procedure, for we have recovered a very considerable inheritance. He accumulated incalculable riches which his heirs have too wastefully ignored.



We live in the century of noise, and noise is the negation of music. Noise is not necessary; but we cannot do without music. Everybody screams, hoping to be heard above the noise and be-

<sup>5</sup>Mr. Malipiero's argument is borne out by Mr. R. O. Morris in his book on "Contrapuntal Technique in the Sixteenth Century", the following quotation from which, although it refers to music of the preceding century, still applies to the case of Monteverdi: "It has already been said more than once that the time-signature at the beginning of a sixteenth-century composition [and, as a consequence, the bar-line] is of purely metrical significance, exercising an important influence on the harmonic structure of the composition, but having nothing to do with the rhythmical structure of the parts taken individually....But the composers of the sixteenth century were not content with the effect obtainable by contrasting the real rhythmical accent with the imaginary metrical accent. Above all, they loved to make the rhythmical accents of each part cross and clash with those of every other part. This constant rhythmical conflict is the most vital and suggestive feature in the whole of the sixteenth-century technique....The difficulty is largely one of preconception, of realizing that the bar-line is not really the tyrant we have come to imagine it." [Editor's note].

lieving that if noise is progress the most progressive will be those who dominate by making more noise; and in the general disorder we hear only the words "modern," "new art," and other even more ridiculous expressions, while a throng of deformed creatures struggles in the dust and the public criers exalt the marvels of their damaged goods. If we mount toward the sources of antique musical art we shall be able to project ourselves with greater strength into the future, avoiding the abyss of the chaotic present. Monteverdi, that prodigious alchemist, offers us the elixir of long life distilled in his marvellous alembics. And the infallibility of his potions has been demonstrated by his compositions: they remain eternally "modern."

*(Translated by Berta Gerster-Gardini)*

## MODERN ITALIAN COMPOSERS

By GUIDO M. GATTI

THE convulsion which the war caused in the world—upsetting all that had seemed comfortably fixed for eternity, challenging everything, revaluing all accepted standards—had a sensible repercussion in the field of music. Music, indeed, experienced with particular violence what has been called “the post-war crisis.” The camp was divided in two. On the one hand were those who, having derived great material benefits from the conflict, clung placidly to the belief that everything was going on just as before, that the disturbances would rapidly quiet down, and that music would resume its course at the very point at which it had been interrupted by the war. On the other, the far more numerous company of those who had suffered all the hardships of the war, who had sustained violent blows to body or mind, who had watched the collapse of all illusions, all theories, and could find no such footing as in the preëxisting order. The first group yielding to indifference, materialism—is the static; the other—animated by passion, idealism—is the dynamic. And, as was logical, this fervor for new things at first found expression largely in a negative point of view. Everything was called “modern” which was problematical, which required a key for its comprehension, which would interest especially the intelligence and the reasoning faculties of the mind, and which, above all, was directed “against” something: the only way to feel alive, at least in music, seemed to be to declare all others to be dead, definitively dead and buried. This is the period of the apparent triumph of atonality, of polytonality, of the dissolution of architectonic form in a disintegration which reduced the material of music to a fine dust of sound, and psychology to the infinitesimal analysis of every sensation and every emotion. It was the period in which Schönberg, psychoanalysis, and Marcel Proust gathered their greenest laurels: the final palingenesis of romanticism and of decadence.

But already, below the surface, the second stage of the crisis was preparing. After the frantic search on every hand for liberty, a liberator, after the bursting of all chains, there supervened a fearful sense of uneasiness and the question arose: “What will become of music, *after*, when there is nothing left for it to destroy, nothing to deny?” This fear of utter liberty, which is a sort of

vertigo at the edge of the void, produced that "return to law", to constituted order, which has been so wide-spread in these last years and manifest in the most varied ways, in the most diverse fields. In art this phenomenon has been called *neoclassicism*, an expression that is neither exact nor final: classic form was seized upon as an anchor of salvation, as a refuge all solidly barred about, which by isolating the artist could save him from the shipwreck (except, of course, that he escaped every time the storm seemed to abate and the sea to grow calm). Sonatas and sonatinas, symphonies and sinfoniettas, concertos and concertinos, partitas and suites of dances appeared to composers at this time as ready schemes, as old and tested armatures to be adapted, at most, to the measure, slightly reduced, of the men of to-day. (If indeed it were not, as Benjamin Cremieux<sup>1</sup> suggested apropos the philosophic-literary movement headed by Jacques Maritain, the equivocal and not at all orthodox desire to "cast oneself against a discipline in order to retrieve the idea of sin, the price of sensuality and of forbidden things.") But may we speak, in this case, of a true and proper revaluation of values—as opposed to the preceding uneasiness; or is it not rather a spirit, pure and simple, of conservation and of restoration? For my own part, I think this second stage of the crisis is already being left behind and that we are on the threshold of a third stage which will be the truly creative stage, out of which the music of our own time shall arise, not as imagined in criticism and polemic, but in its concrete reality as an art.

But none of these experiments will have been in vain. The great gust of atonalism has violently, but perhaps opportunely, shattered the windows and contributed to breaking the spell of a tonal harmonic system now pretty well mired and incapable of extricating itself by its own strength from scholastic and academic shackles and of renewing itself from the ground up. The severe neoclassic discipline has brought back the appreciation of constructive and architectonic values, has given the artist the consciousness of limits and the taste for finished things, for work brought to a conclusion and watched over in all its parts, thus leading him away from that esthetic theory of fragmentariness which had spread so dangerously right after the war. It is but a short step from the concept of "finish" to that of order: and now from all sides comes the cry for establishment of an order out of which shall come the salvation and benediction of art. Tradition, rule, discipline, the "right", are words that frequently recur in jour-

<sup>1</sup>"Inquiétude et reconstruction," in *Nouvelle Revue Française*, May 2, 1931.



nalistic writings and that have been echoed, among others, by Alfredo Casella in his recent book.<sup>2</sup> Vague words and yet dangerous, which should be applied with the greatest prudence to artistic problems: ambiguity has always arisen out of the transfer of concepts and expressions from the realm of practical politics or morals to that of esthetic theory, and this is more than ever true to-day, when these concepts are polarized and fixed in an extremism that is thoroughly anti-evolutional. Order and discipline, desirable things, may in civil life come from the outside (laws, codes, statutes): in the artist they lose their character of limitation and must become synonymous with inner conscience, individual necessity, the faculty of self-criticism. "*Les hommes pensent volontiers,*" wrote Julien Benda,<sup>3</sup> "*que, lorsqu'ils veulent que la société, par exemple, présente de l'ordre, ils transportent dans le domaine des choses pratiques une idée qu'ils ont formée à l'occasion des choses de l'art, c'est-à-dire d'activités désintéressées. Je crois que c'est le contraire qui est vrai: les hommes forment l'idée d'ordre à l'occasion des choses pratiques, j'entends qui ont besoin d'être ordonnées pour vivre et être fortes et c'est 'ensuite' qu'ils transportent cette idée dans le domaine esthétique. Les théoriciens de l'ordre croient qu'ils veulent que la société soit à l'image de l'oeuvre d'art; je dirais bien plutôt qu'ils veulent que l'oeuvre d'art soit à l'image de la société.*"

Let me say at once, however, that Italian composers have remained onlookers rather than actors in this turbulent movement, continuing, each on his own account, along the road opened (not without effort, as we shall see) by the pioneers of the modern renaissance of Italian music. If exception be made of Casella, it is difficult to find in the pages written by Italian composers of to-day—and we are speaking, of course, of those who count—signs of that travail and unrest which pervade the present musical production of Europe (although already in a less degree than a little while ago). I mean thereby not to establish the superiority of their work, taken as a whole, but simply to draw attention to a fact that seems worthy of notice and that may have, in the near future, consequences of importance.

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If young composers in Italy to-day fairly easily find publishers who print their works, theatres and concert-organizations that accept them, and, above all, a public that is interested in them

<sup>2</sup>"21+26", Ed. Augustea, Rome, 1931.

<sup>3</sup>"De l'idée d'ordre et de l'idée de Dieu", in *Nouvelle Revue Française*, August 1, 1930.

and that, though not unreservedly, appreciates and recompenses them for the most worthy of their efforts, they should give thanks to their immediate predecessors, to the generation of composers, that is, who are now in their fifties and who persistently assaulted the reactionary and provincial mentality which held inexorable sway in the days of their youth. Those were the days when verist melodrama tyrannized unchallenged over the operatic stage, the *Blütezeit* of the Piedigrotta song<sup>4</sup>—not the popular and spontaneous, but the artificial product of musical commerce!—and the pseudo-Viennese operetta “made in Italy”; the days, in short, in which Mascagni said, “When I feel that I have no more inspiration, I shall write a symphony.” Years of bad manners in art, in which a double labor was needed of demolition and reconstruction, of tearing down and building anew; and upon this work weighed the hostile inertia of the mass, distrustful and uncultured. Imagine what must have been the ideal strength of these composers if they succeeded in creating an atmosphere favorable to their own work and to that of their successors!

The further away we get from this heroic period—1908, Pizzetti's music to D'Annunzio's *La Nave*; 1910, Malipiero's *Impressioni dal vero*, followed shortly by his *Preludi autunnali*; 1913, Casella's *Notte di Maggio* and *Nove pezzi* for piano—the more clearly defined appear to us the personalities of those composers who dared renounce the easy way to success and set themselves problems in the renovation of their art which they solved, each in his own fashion, according to his temperament. If we reexamine to-day the work of the men just mentioned, reviewing their position in the picture of European music, and of Italian music in particular, from a point of view that has by necessity changed and with a spirit inevitably affected by the course of the years and by the vicissitudes through which it has passed, this work seems to us rich in vitality, in force of irradiation, in power of attraction. The best among the younger men derive from one or another of these three; and if it is not possible to speak of schools, we can and must speak of masters.

Pizzetti has pursued serenely, without hesitation but without haste, the way that is familiar to us all ever since his early works—a path across open fields, sunlit with our brightest tradition. If he does not deny the music drama of the nineteenth century—and he has, on the contrary, an admiration for Verdi, an affection,

<sup>4</sup>At Piedigrotta there is held a yearly contest or festival of popular balladry and the prize-winning songs there offered are published in a volume entitled “Piedigrotta, Anno—”. Such songs as “Oh, Sole mio”, “Maria, Maria”, and Luigi Denza's “Funiculi, funicula” have been some of the “blossoms” produced. [Translator's note.]

rather, which is connected with a common origin in their native soil of Emilia—he accepts it in the spirit which was, in the best cases, nourished on noble sentiments and fine passions, and which disdained in art the little things of every day, the timid stammering, the feminine restlessness; but in his forms he tempered it with an aristocratic sense of measure and proportion, with the taste which came to him not only by nature but through education in a severe school, with the perfect consciousness at every instant of the end to be attained. Since his very first beginnings he has been shaping himself a poetic norm of music drama which he has been little by little retouching and perfecting on the basis of his own experience; as he has recently said in this journal,<sup>5</sup> for him drama and music have a common origin, are born of the same intuition, and tend ideally to become identified. “The truly great dramatist is also musician. And again, any musician wishing to set a drama to music must have the dramatic instinct. Otherwise failure is inevitable.” For Pizzetti ethics and esthetics move in the same sphere and are so closely related that the conception of a work of art becomes less and less precise or circumscribed, while real life assumes a position of prime importance, as though to set up a sort of contrast to the purely artistic element. (This is at bottom the romantic esthetic which reappears, in various forms, in all his characteristic endeavors.) Theory aside, Pizzetti’s work shows an undeniable enrichment and deepening, from *Fedra* to the *Rondo veneziano*: an enrichment in musical substance, an always more vigorous discrimination in language, the exclusion of everything unnecessary, and at the same time greater plasticity of line and a greater brilliance and expressiveness in orchestration. A certain indifference to sound, with which the author of *Débora e Jaële* might be reproached, is no longer apparent in his later works from *Fra Gherardo* on; and certain pages of the *Straniero* and the *Rondo veneziano* reveal, with regard to symphonic concept, an almost new Pizzetti.

While Pizzetti’s influence on the young Italians of to-day—an influence which undeniably has now reached its height, involves motives of a spiritual and moral as well as musical order, Casella, on the other hand, has always exercised a strong intellectual appeal for those who see impersonated in him the type of the modern artist *par excellence*, the recognized propagandist of all schools, the importer and popularizer of the most up-to-date tendencies apparent in Europe since the war. Casella’s function has up to the present exceeded that of a composer: it has been of

<sup>5</sup>“Music and Drama”, *The Musical Quarterly*, October, 1931.

the greatest benefit to the development of the cultural consciousness of the Italians. To-day, in declaring that he has reached the full maturity of his style and that he foresees no other "manners" in his evolution, he not only says something no artist has a right to say, but he contradicts his whole past and renounces one of the essential characteristics of his personality, derived—as it always was—from an extreme mobility and a facility and felicity in experimentation which made him a rare (if not unique) figure in contemporary music. But the opera he has just finished—the *Donna serpente*<sup>6</sup> of Gozzi on which he has been working for many years—should tell us unequivocally whether the present phase of his evolution is to be nevertheless just another stage in his journey and whether we may in consequence expect some more pleasant surprises from him.

As to Malipiero, his influence seems at first glance to be limited; yet it exists and must be reckoned with. In his hermitage at Asolo, where the composer of the *Sette canzoni* rarely sits down to the piano, he is regarded by the younger men as the highest example of disinterestedness and devotion to art; there are for him no extra-musical considerations, no practical relationships which can bring him into closer touch with the world: only the fascination, which so often has something mysterious, something magical, emanating from his music and which no one with musical sensibility can escape. Faithful as few are to their esthetic ideas, Malipiero may be said to be the only one in Italy to have attempted to give appropriate form to the new concept of the operatic spectacle demanded by the new spirit of our time, breaking the closed circle of the music-drama (Wagnerian, or Debussyan, or other, works which are but the final consequence, the last products of the principles of opera as laid down in the seventeenth century). His knowledge of the whole history of the Italian musical theatre—knowledge not of a musicologist but of an artist, as he has shown, among other things, by his modern edition of Monteverdi's complete works—while offering him the point of departure for his renovations, has kept him from falling into the bizarre, the strange, the artificial. Anyone who compares the "revolutionary" Malipiero of the *Torneo notturno*, the *Esilio dell'Eroe*, the recent beautiful *Concerti* for orchestra, with other musical revolutionaries of Europe, especially central Europe, will soon see how much more original and bold has been Malipiero's rebellion against the formalism and the habits of the mediocre late-nineteenth-century composers,

<sup>6</sup>First performed at the Teatro Reale, Rome, March 17, 1932, the composer conducting.

while that of the others has been concerned only with superficialities and has taken refuge in other formulae which twenty years hence—and perhaps even sooner—will be considered as twentieth-century academicism.

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On the occasion of Pizzetti's fiftieth birthday (in September, 1930) a group of pupils—or rather of young disciples, since the only one in it who might properly be called a pupil was Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco—paid him homage with a musical tribute, as was customary in bygone centuries. Among those who took part were Virgilio Mortari, Mario Pilati, and Antonio Veretti, three young composers whom I have been following most attentively; and each of them strove to approach the Master's style just as closely as possible: the same symbols, note for note, even to the composition of a whole phrase, the taking of themes from Pizzetti's works, of bits become familiar, the recapturing of the atmosphere characteristic of his art—these things are not surprising in a collection of this sort (although, to my mind, perhaps somewhat exaggerated). Really striking are the signs of such "Pizzettism" in other compositions of these men.

Let us take a *Sonata* for violin by Mortari. In the first movement<sup>7</sup> we encounter a passage like this:

V. Mortari—Sonata in re per violino e pianoforte, I.  
Un poco meno  $\text{♩} = 88-118$

Violino *p implorante*

Piano

*animando* *risornando in tempo* *p*

<sup>7</sup>Ed. Forlivesi, Firenze, p. 4.

Two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats, followed by a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats. The second system also consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats, followed by a grand staff with a key signature of two flats. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'cresc.' and 'f'.

Turn to Veretti's *Sonata come una fantasia* for 'cello<sup>8</sup> and in the first measures we run against the following theme:

A. Veretti—Sonata come una fantasia per bello e pianoforte.  
Molto lento

Violoncello

Piano

Violoncello

Piano

pp profondamente espressivo poco tratt. a tempo

p dolce

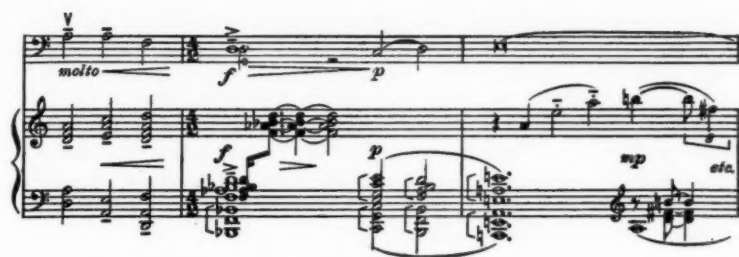
fratt. molto

seguiro p

f p poco

<sup>8</sup>Ed. Ricordi, Milano.





Then again, look at Pilati's *Sonata in F* for violin<sup>8</sup> and we promptly find some melodic bits characteristically Pizzettian: the deep grumbling of the bass and the plaintive cry as of one who calls for help:

M. Pilati—Sonata in fa per violino e pianoforte, I.

Violino

Piano

*pp*

*dim.* *etc.*

<sup>8</sup>Ed. Ricordi, Milano.

We reproduce only these three examples, but there are echoes of Pizzetti in the other works of these three composers, at all times: for if Veretti's *Sonata* was written at the end of 1922 (when the author was but 22, having been born February 20, 1900), his *Trio* in C for violin, 'cello, and piano, dating from 1927, and his *Sinfonia italiana* for orchestra of 1929, would illustrate the case equally well. The same may be said of Pilati's *Quintetto* for strings and piano (1927-28) and (with certain reservations) of Mortari's *Rapsodia* for orchestra (1929-30).

But, granting this, we cannot deny that each of these composers has the desire to achieve his own personal expression, a desire that is already becoming a reality.

Virgilio Mortari (born at Passirana di Lainate, near Milan, December 6, 1902) will, I believe, be the one who will most easily succeed in finding and expressing his own temperament, which tends towards comedy rather than drama, and towards a droll popular comedy at that: a certain pathos which is scattered through his music will finally assume its proper proportions and be no more than the touch of sentiment opportunely tempering the laughter. I am convinced that eventually this cerebral humorist and comedian, childish to the point of senility, will give us friendly and healthy fun, the fruit of a sane intellectual and moral maturity. After the pleasing merriment of the *Partenza del Crociato* (1923)<sup>9</sup> and *Giro giro tondo* (1924),<sup>9</sup> after the lightly comic *Secchi e Sberlecchi* (1925) and the diverting *Caterinella* (1928),<sup>10</sup> we shall see something more solid. So, at least, his recent production gives us reason to hope, especially the *Rapsodia* for orchestra.<sup>10</sup> It is music that breathes deep, in which the composer has really overcome his greatest difficulty, namely that of finding a style—an exact and coherent artistic form—for all those voices of the countryside, clear or vague, which inspired this music. And he succeeded without robbing the work of any of its freshness and vitality.

Mario Pilati, born at Naples, October 16, 1903, and teaching to-day in the same conservatory from which he graduated, is of a very different nature. In his music, which is copious though not all published, there are faint traces of neoclassicism and impressionism: his *Suite* for strings and piano has nothing in common with the many classic *Partitas* that have sprung up so abundantly of late. The spirit that animates it is a good deal more romantic

<sup>9</sup>Ed. Forlivesi, Firenze.

<sup>10</sup>Ed. Ricordi, Milano. Raymond Hall wrote in the New York Times of May 15th, 1932: "Virgilio Mortari's 'Rhapsody,' premiered at the Oxford festival last Summer, evoked a favorable response from the Augusteum audience at its recent first Italian hearing, under Molinari."

than classical, and the traditional form has been admirably adjusted to contain it. I would even add that never so well as in this *Suite* of 1924-25 has Pilati succeeded in checking his instinctive tendency to verbosity and in maintaining the equilibrium between form and color, between the whole and the single parts. As, for example, in the *Sarabanda*, of somewhat Ravelian grace, with its episode for the strings, which shows also a fine instrumental sensibility:

M. Pilati—Suite per archi e pianoforte: II. Sarabanda

The musical score is for the second movement, *Sarabanda*, from the *Suite per archi e pianoforte* by M. Pilati. It is written for Violini I, Violini II, Viole, Violoncelli, and Contrabassi. The score is in 3/4 time and D major. The first system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "I Solo, senza sord." and "pp espress." with a crescendo. The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "La II Metà con sord." and "pp". The Contrabassi part is marked "pp". The second system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f". The third system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f". The fourth system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f". The fifth system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f". The sixth system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f". The seventh system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f". The eighth system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f". The ninth system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f". The tenth system shows the Violini I part with a solo section marked "Solo" and "f e vibrato". The Violini II, Viole, and Violoncelli parts are marked "Tutti, Metà con sordina e Metà senza". The Contrabassi part is marked "f".

Later a certain oratorical manner creeps in which inflates his expression without a corresponding intensification of emotion: the composer assumes an attitude which is meant to be a challenge in

the eyes of the advance guard (a facile writer, he has developed these ideas in articles in various journals) without however being able to crystallize his academic dream of reconstruction. Witness of this period there are, besides the violin sonata already mentioned, the *Sonata in A* for 'cello (1929) and the *Quintet*. This last-named work has about it a continual breathlessness, a reaching after something which it does not manage to attain: it has a touch of the Pizzettian drama, but the catharsis is missing; the lyric resolution, one of those song-endings which in Pizzetti's music sum up the drama, justify it, crown it so felicitously. Little by little, the composition proceeds, the organism becomes less coherent; the last movement is full of defects, is random and bombastic, and when it seems to pull itself together, comes out with an arioso in the 'cello which is in questionable taste and in every way inappropriate to its time and place:<sup>11</sup>

M. Piliati—Quintetto in re, IV.  
Molto largo e sostenuto

Violoncello

Piano

*p dolce e calmo*

*cresc. molto*

<sup>11</sup>Pocket score (Ricordi), pp. 67-68.

## A. Veretti—Duo strumentale: Canzone in memoria di Arcangelo Corelli.

Violino

*pp con espressione dolcissima*

Piano

*pp*

Veretti, on the other hand, would call himself a neoclassicist. He studied with Franco Alfano in Bologna, but resembles no one less than his master. Veretti's neoclassicism is rather Italian, which is to say that it avoids extreme coldness and reserve and manages to mingle with the classic a touch of the baroque. Being not over-generously gifted, his imagination takes no surprising flights; but, aware of his own limits, he knows how to make the most of the counter-point of line and mass, seeking perfection in the achievement of balance. If there is danger that this chosen way may lead at times to academic dryness, he is for the most part saved from it by that feeling of outdoor freshness which comes to his music through a certain popular flavor in the melody and a whimsicality as of improvisation. Melodic arabesques of a seventeenth-century style, together with clear, transparent harmonies and unexpected modulations, give it a certain savor of pleasantly suggested anachronism. When he chooses his texts opportunely—as in the *Medico volante* of Riccardo Bacchelli after Molière (but more Bacchelli than Molière), and the *Due Canti di Tasso*<sup>12</sup>—then he gives us something successful and of worth; as when he intones that song in memory of Arcangelo Corelli, which is the best part of his *Duo strumentale* for violin and piano<sup>13</sup> and which tells us much about the composer's preferences and about the origins of his musical nature:

*poco traf.* etc.

<sup>12</sup>Ed. A. & G. Carisch, Milano.

<sup>13</sup>Ed. Ricordi, Milano, pp. 12-13.

Since it is not within the scope of this article to give a complete picture of musical production in Italy to-day—even if space allowed—it has seemed preferable to speak more fully of three composers only rather than to present a dry catalog of many names.<sup>14</sup> And these three have been chosen because they are young men from eighteen to thirty or a little over, who have already produced works that are worth consideration and such as to permit some judgment of their tendencies, if not of their lasting value.

(Translated by Andrea Adriani)

<sup>14</sup>The reader is referred also to my articles on Alfredo Casella, Pizzetti, Vincenzo Tommasini, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Davico, and de Sabata, which have appeared in this magazine between 1920 and 1926. Naturally, all of these composers have continued to produce; but I am not saying that their more recent compositions are, on the whole, better than those heretofore considered.



## THE MUSICAL CLOCK OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE

By JULIEN TIERSOT

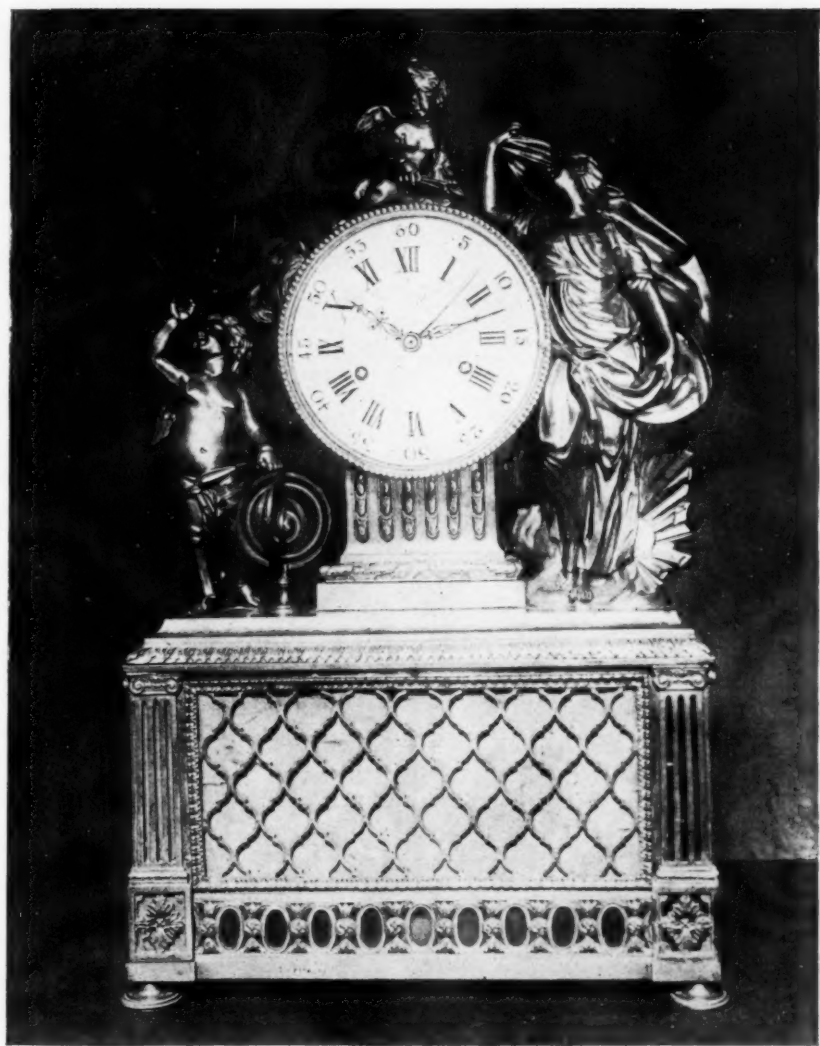
**A** DEPTS in musical science whose memory reaches back to the days preceding the war of 1914, may perhaps remember that during the session of the Société Internationale de Musique (S.I.M.) held at Paris in the Spring of that year there was given at the palace of Versailles, in the Gallery of Mirrors—an historical spot, from so many points of view—a concert of chamber-music from the time of Louis XIV and the years succeeding. At this concert were to be heard works by Couperin for viols and clavecin, masterly pieces written for the latter instrument, vocal numbers, and various other excerpts from larger works. Then, at the end of this somewhat ascetic fare—as a dessert, if you will—the Conservator of the Palace and member of the Academy Pierre de Nolhac had an object brought in, which one would hardly have expected to appear on a concert-platform. It was, in a way, a monumental object, a relic from among the treasures of Marie-Antoinette, queen of France: a clock of considerable size and, as a work of art, of real beauty. The dial-case was supported by allegorical and mythological sculptures in gold bronze, done in the best style of that charming eighteenth century that has bequeathed us so many works of exquisite taste. Moreover, the clock and its ornamental case rested on a similarly adorned and chiseled chest which enclosed an automatic musical mechanism. It is set going, and, to the surprise of the audience, thin, tenuous tones escape from it to float out through the vast hall, forming barely perceptible melodic lines overladen with ornaments beneath the multiplicity of which it was not always easy to distinguish a connected melody; a hovering outflow of ancient music whose venerable guise possessed an unexpected charm. One could have wished for a closer study of these sonorities, so new in their antiquity, to analyze them, to identify the melodies, to fix them in notation. And then, only a few days later, the world-wide catastrophe broke out, and during more than four years there were other matters to think of. Although since then a long time has elapsed, it may not seem too late to-day to realize the project conceived so many years ago, especially since no one has thought of undertaking the task in the

interim. Moreover, to delve a little into a pleasant or glorious past, offers a welcome escape from present and sterner realities. That is why we are now resuming the study, suggested years before, of a musical object so unusual that, viewed from a modern standpoint, it must appear new despite its age.

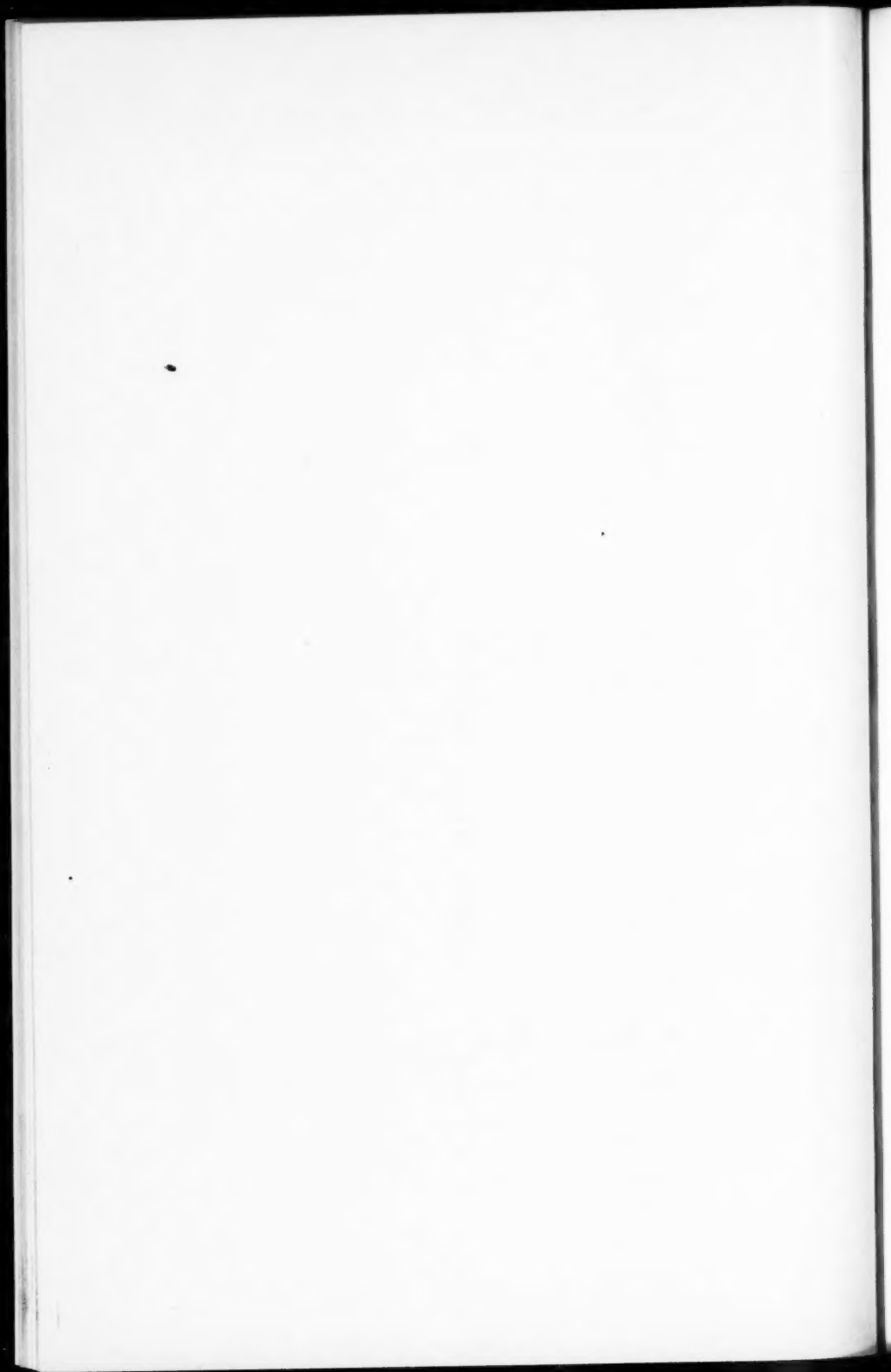
No words shall be wasted in describing the clock and its ornaments, for the accompanying photographic reproduction will serve better than any verbal explanations. But immediately the question arises, at what period was this article constructed? To this question we are able to reply in the most satisfactory manner possible; and it is by the music itself, in conjunction with the given historical notes, that we are enabled to do so.

First let it be understood that the clock of Marie-Antoinette is the work of a celebrated French clock-maker of the eighteenth century, Pierre Le Roy. His name is traced on the enamel of the frame; he constructed the mechanism of the movement; and whoever may have been the workman who devised the final details of the music-box, it is evident that both craftsmen worked in full accord. For the basic purpose of the music-box was a very practical one: to tell the hours by substituting its own chimes for the prosaic bell-strike, or as a response to the latter. And this, again, is a feature of an antiquated fashion. In times past we have often seen, especially in the provinces, ornamental clocks with the dial inserted in a picture that was usually, in conformity with the period, of a romantic cast, representing a landscape, mountains, a torrent. Frequently these subjects could be set in motion; shepherds, flocks, or vehicles would pass by; the torrent would swell and make the mill-wheel revolve, or threaten to engulf some boat; these moving pictures coincided with the stroke of the hour, whereupon musical tones welled out of the interior, a music-box performing familiar airs—and the good people, particularly the children, were lost in wonder during the visual and auditory contemplation of such marvels!

Marie-Antoinette's musical clock is an instrument of the same kind, though of earlier date and more delicate artistry. The chest upon which it rests is likewise, in its way, a music-box, composed for the most part of cog-wheels that set in rotation a cylinder of cork-oak, upon the rounded surface of which are planted small plates or pins of copper; these, when revolving, strike through the holes of a perforated cardboard, thereby laying open a series of tin pipes (thirteen in number, arranged at the back) to which wind is supplied by a bellows. In reality, therefore, the instrument is a musical organ, whose pipes, differing in length and diameter, are



Marie-Antoinette's Musical Clock (about 1787)



of small dimensions and capable of producing only very soft tones. But it is evident that this instrument of a more intimate character was the model for a mechanical organ of a louder, not to say shrill, tone, which enjoyed wide popularity in the following century; namely, the hand-organ, the purveyor of street-music, which, despite its aforesaid popularity (which even reached the point of wearying its peculiar public), was nevertheless, as we have seen, of aristocratic origin.

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Remaining forgotten at Versailles for more than a century, neglected like so many other precious things (including certain parts of the château itself), stored away in the dim and narrow rooms of the queen's apartment, the clock stood unnoticed by visitors, even those who were familiar with the premises; it seemed to be a waif and stray, worn out and useless. And then, some thirty years ago, the Société des Amis de Versailles took the lead in restoring it to a condition approximating as closely as possible its original state. By a singular stroke of good fortune, the clock-factory where it had been constructed in the eighteenth century was still in existence; in that establishment there obtained a sort of dynastic succession, and it was a descendant of Pierre Le Roy, M. Louis Leroy, who was charged with the restoration of his ancestor's handiwork. He must have found it a task of great delicacy, as it was necessary to exercise extreme precaution in handling an object so long exposed to the ravages of time; for the same reason few persons are even now permitted to hear its tones, and since the Musical Congress of 1914 the hearings have been restricted to very special occasions. However, although it occupies an altogether unique position in the category of pieces which, in collections, are termed exceptionally choice, it is worthy to be scrutinized not merely as a curiosity, but as an object of serious study. It constitutes a live relic of the musical eighteenth century; it is, in consequence, of great interest for the history of music, and deserves our attentive examination.

Truth to tell, no one is better acquainted with it than the writer of this article; for when the work of restoration was begun, it was he who was appointed to assist the mechanical technician, in order to supplement his labors by the necessary musical observations. This did not always proceed without difficulty. To begin with, the movement had to be regulated. At first it ran so fast as to render the musical effect hopelessly confused. There was nothing surprising in that, considering the short diameter of the cylinder on

which the notes were marked; the resulting congestion of tones made it very difficult, and at times quite impossible, to follow the melodic line with certainty. By gradually slowing down the rotation of the cylinder, a less excessive rate of speed was obtained. But even to-day this movement still remains, generally speaking, too fast; it was not feasible to check it further. Its rapidity may be due to the fact that the music was formerly executed faster than comports with our modern feeling; or it may result simply from an imperfection in the mechanism, constrained to excessive speed by the narrowness of the cylinder. We are unable to decide the matter beyond question; however, we are inclined to favor the latter hypothesis, as bringing our feeling for music into closer sympathy with that of the olden time. But the point in which this mechanism has the weight of an authentic document lies in its actual tone-production. From this music there emanates a charm, and it teaches us a lesson. These musical tones are extremely high-pitched and tenuous. They seem like ancestral voices penetrating to us through the distant aisles of time. And what is it that these ancestors would fain sing to us—or play to us, seeing that the greater part of their repertory is instrumental rather than vocal?

That is the question to which we shall now try to find the answer. It was not the least difficult portion of the task entrusted to us when we undertook this musical investigation. Neither a written list nor information of any kind was at hand to assist in tracing the origin of the several airs. One had, therefore, to recognize them when played, and this presupposed a special familiarity with the musical repertory of the eighteenth century.

We were so fortunate as to be able to identify all of these tunes, ten in number. Among them are some of the most famous airs of the period; but the remainder (and these formed a majority) had succeeded in winning only transient popularity. Those in the former group could be identified at a first hearing; as for the others one had to wait, experiment, and look to a chance reading or hearing for their discovery. It is not fair to expect anyone to remember every comedy-opera by Dezède or Desaugiers, or every song and dance-tune in vogue during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Still, all ten tunes were identified; and here is the detailed list of them:

1. "Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?"; theme of the vocal quartet in *Lucile*, comedy-opera by Grétry (1769).
2. Air from *Les trois Fermiers*, comedy-opera by Dezède (1777).



3. Minuet from *Céphale et Procris*, opera by Grétry (1773).
4. Gavotte from *Armide*, opera by Gluck (1777).
5. "Il pleut bergère" (*Le Retour des Champs*), romance by Fabre d'Eglantine, music by Simon, publ. for the first time in "*La Muse Lyrique*" for 1782.
6. Harlequin's ariette in *Les deux Jumeaux de Bergame* by Florian, music by Desaugiers (1782).
7. Air from *La Camargo ou Paris est au roi*, vaudeville or contredanse (about 1730).
8. Musette from *Nina, ou La Fable par amour*, comedy-opera by Dalayrac (1786).
9. "*L'Amour est un enfant trompeur*", romance by the chevalier de Boufflers, music by Martini.
10. "*Avec les jeux dans le village*", vaudeville from "*Les Amours d'été*" (1781) adapted to the words of Berquin's romance "*Le voilà, ce nid de fauvettes*".

This enumeration is of special interest in fixing a date of importance to us—the date at which the queen's clock was constructed. Marie-Antoinette was obliged to leave Versailles during the popular uprising in October, 1789. On the other hand, the most recent of the pieces listed, the musette from *Nina*, is of 1786. Thus the time of the constructing of the clock and its musical accessories is limited to the space of three years, from 1786 to 1789.

As a matter of fact, this little collection, taken as a whole, constitutes a set of selected pieces whose right to their place therein is thoroughly well-founded, for they enjoyed the favor of the wider public and of the higher classes toward the close of the reign of Louis XVI. Let us take them now in their chronological order. *Lucile*, by Grétry, whence was gleaned the celebrated theme quoted under No. 1, dates from 1769; *Céphale et Procris*, by the same master, from 1773; *Armide*, by Gluck, from 1777, as also the comedy-opera *Les trois Fermiers* by Dezède. We are even able to fix the dates of the simple romances "*Avec les jeux*" (1781) and "*Il pleut bergère*" (1782), the latter being also the date of an ariette by Desaugiers. Finally, as we have already seen, the most recent of all, the romance from *Nina*, dates from 1786. It is evident that the romance by Martini, fashioned to suit the same taste, belongs to the same period. There remains one chanson of earlier date that figures as a survival, namely, the air from *La Camargo*, a contredanse in vogue since the second quarter of the century, which is approximately dated by its title, the name of a famous dancer whose vogue at the Opéra began in 1726. Therefore, excepting

this last, all these pieces belong to the seventeen years between 1769 and 1786.

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It is a peculiar sensation to hear these old-world airs just as the queen of France heard them in their prime. They appeal to us with a charm that is faded, yet inescapable. In the song by Grétry, "Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?" there lives the sentimentality that was all the vogue at the end of the eighteenth century, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau through Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Florian down to a man like Robespierre; and Marie-Antoinette had not remained insensible to this appeal. To the same order of impressions belongs the romance "Il pleut, il pleut bergère," still popular to-day; the composer named Simon, was an obscure musician; the author of the words was Fabre d'Eglantine poet and dramatist, who, having tried his hand at politics, shared the fate of his friend Danton and died on the scaffold in 1794. Berlioz speaks of "This tender air with its naïf 'Il pleut bergère,'" and we shall again refer to him, the grim composer of "La Marche au Supplice", when we have to deal with the Musette from *Nina*. This latter is likewise a pastoral air of an essentially southern, Latin impressionability (Dalayrac was native to the region of the Pyrenees), and at the same time breathes a sentiment of genuine pre-romanticism. Berlioz, who had a great fondness for Dalayrac, also had a special predilection for this melody; in his *Mémoires* he evokes recollections of his early childhood when, within the shadows of his lovely Alpine mountains, a prey to the melancholy that so well accords with these rustic accents, he dreamed of the lovely young maidens who, amid those marvelous scenes, had for the first time caused his precocious heart to throb, and played on his flute the air of the Musette from *Nina*.

Some of the other musical fragments, detached for insertion into the instrumental mechanism, were of a different character. One was the gavotte from Gluck's *Armide*, overflowing with melody, both heroic and sensual; another, the minuet from *Céphale et Procris*, which evokes the mythological Graces à la mode of the eighteenth century. Then there are simple romances, and airs out of comedy-operas, displaying no transcendent genius, but conserving some features peculiar to the amiable physiognomy of the art of that period.

But this music, so ingeniously resuscitated, does not appeal solely to our imagination. Viewed historically, the very manner

in which the several pieces are mechanically recorded affords valuable illustrations and a unique source of information regarding certain practices of our art one hundred and fifty years ago.

In their written form we are acquainted with all the pieces the origin of which we could trace; from scores, engraved or in manuscript, we have learned the manner of their notation. But does all this suffice for their authentic rendition? There are traditions for their execution which we ought to know, would we fully enter into their spirit. The interpretation of the greatest masterpieces is subject to incessant fluctuations, which have the effect of sensibly modifying the expression that is conveyed by simply reading them. However insignificant this musical toy, fabricated to satisfy a queen's caprice, it contributes largely to our enlightenment on this important question.

One thing must always be borne in mind—into the performance of ancient music there invariably entered an element of improvisation. The truth of this assertion will be apparent if we study the written evidence concerning the harmonic structure; the eighteenth-century composer wrote out a figured-bass to which the harpsichordist or organist supplied the chords or harmonies; and these differed (if not in the presentation of the basic harmonies, at least in the configuration of the added parts) with different interpreters. Hereby the physiognomy of the work was sometimes singularly modified. As for the melody-parts, whether vocal or instrumental, the virtuosi varied and ornamented them, each after his own fashion; and frequently, beneath this accumulation of added notes, the composer found it difficult to recognize what he had written. There was need for the advent of a genius like Gluck to bring order into the maze of these eccentricities; but in general the executants felt themselves so much the masters of the situation that they paid little heed to the composers' intentions. We do not say that this was as it should be; we simply state that it was the usage of the period, and that it is important for us to realize the facts.

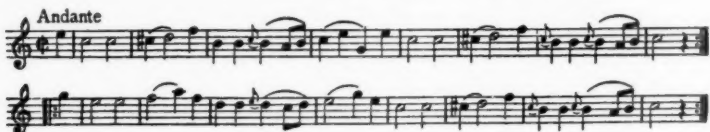
Now, these facts are demonstrated by the musical clock of Marie-Antoinette. Comparing the airs as we heard them rendered by it at Versailles with the written or printed versions handed down to us, we discover in some cases sensible differences; and those revealed to us by the musical instrument possess real importance in conveying to our ears the very echo of those contemporary voices and thus revivifying the old-time tradition.

We have just mentioned Gluck. True, he was no longer alive in 1786, when the instrument was constructed; we do not know

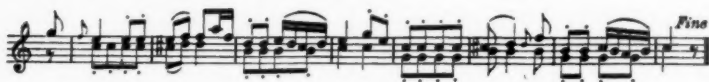
what he would have thought of the interpretation of his gavotte from *Armide*, which, on our small automatic organ, has no doubt lost something of its pristine breadth. Without expatiating on this point, let us simply compare the melody as set forth in the original score with the ornamented version as it was transcribed for the cylinder. And first of all let us take up the theme as given in the score, with its noble mood of mingled heroism and languor, its intensity of musical expression:<sup>1</sup>



At Versailles this same melodic line, in an animated (too animated) movement, is moreover smothered in ornaments and repeated notes that sensibly alter its character and physiognomy.



It should be noted—and this observation is set down here once for all—that the reproduction of the tunes on the mechanical instrument is effected essentially from a melodic point of view, for the reason that the very narrow gauge of the tiny organ-pipes could produce only high tones that were wholly bereft of basses. However, in some pieces there is added to the melody a second part, usually treated like a fundamental bass. But the theme almost always begins with an exposition in all its nudity, and the harmonizing part first intervenes in the second phrase, persisting thereafter down to the final cadence. Such is the case in the gavotte from *Armide*, the initial eight measures being played without accompaniment (as we have written them), after which the piece continues with the accompaniment of this second part, adding a reprise, until the conclusion of the theme is reached:

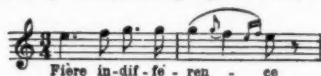


<sup>1</sup>To facilitate comparison we have transposed it to C-major, and shall follow the same course with all the following examples.

Below we give another example that is no less interesting, and similarly borrowed from a dance in an opera: the minuet from *Céphale et Procris* in the "Ballet des Nymphes de Diane", where-with ends the first act of Grétry's mythological opera. Given out at first by the orchestra alone, it is then taken up by the voices, a solo followed by a chorus. We append the melodic line of this dance, which is not wanting in a certain racial air:



For the reprise the solo voice intones, as a commencement, the following melodic design, still a trifle embroidered, but quite without such embroidery when sung by the chorus:

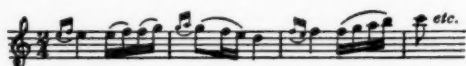


This air, when I jotted down its notation at Versailles, was among those then unknown to me, and one that I was only later enabled to identify; my notation of it was therefore not influenced by any haunting memory. It was not without surprise that, beneath the deluge of notes overflowing it, I was finally able to make out the melodic line of the mechanical transcription so as to compare it with the written original. The latter itself has some little ornamentation, but the instrumental version has a great deal more.



The archaic effect on the hearer of such a production is due to an almost continuous tonal tremolo that quite distinctly resembles

the tremulous voices of aged women. This also accounts for the impression of antiqueness naturally produced by this old instrument. Trills and mordants and gruppetti are introduced at the close of phrases; sometimes the very opening notes are disguised by them, so that the melody-tone must await their cessation to make itself felt. Still, the melodic line remains intact, however changed may be its aspect. See for example the opening of Grétry's classic and sustained melody "Où peut-on être mieux"; it can hardly be denied that these little superadded notes detract, in a measure, from its serenity. But such was the taste of the period.



One of the problems in the ornamental style of music in the eighteenth century relates to the appoggiatura. Should that little note have an appreciable duration, equal in certain cases to that of the principal note on which it leans? It must be admitted that the instrument at Versailles fails to furnish a satisfactory answer to this question; it contents itself with a multiplicity of small and very rapid notes which, properly speaking, never possess a definite value in the measure.

Certain of these tunes have nevertheless preserved a frank and fresh air peculiarly French, notably those taken from our early comedy-operas. We quote one from *Les trois Fermiers* by Dezède (both composition and composer are to-day forgotten):



And one from *Les deux Jumeaux de Bergame*, music by Desaugiers, an author who played his small part at the time of the Revolution and wrote, in particular, a cantata which was performed at Notre-Dame de Paris on the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, July the 14th, 1790; all that is lost, and if Desaugiers is remembered at all it is through his son, who was a chansonnier in great vogue at the beginning of the nineteenth



century. The father was, however, capable of writing ariettes quite classic in style and not devoid of grace, as the one played by the clock bears witness:



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Withal, let us not indulge in too great illusions; it is only too evident that this musical mechanism, while permitting us a glance into the remote past, is incapable of giving us an idea of the grand style which, amid the flood of ariettes from comedy-operas and romances, was assiduously cultivated in France at the same period. Of course, when the orchestra of the Opéra or that of the Concert Spirituel gave performances of the masterworks of Gluck or Sacchini, or even of Piccini, or when Mozart wrote one of his juvenile symphonies with a view to such performance, conducted by Gossec, that was a very different matter, and precisely what we should most like to hear. But no hint of these marvelous productions could find room in Marie-Antoinette's music-box. Let us therefore be content with what we have, and derive satisfaction from the fact that, thanks to the mechanism constructed for the gratification of the queen's taste, we are enabled to gain a real insight into some practices and traditions of a style of art whose products excite our interest for so many reasons.

And, as long as we are dealing with mechanical art, we cannot deny ourselves an allusion to a further advance not made until over a century later than this first attempt at the fixation of musical tones for posterity. The phonograph has arrived in its turn and in its own time. It was a marvelous invention. With its aid we are enabled to hear, without leaving our home, music gathered from the most distant lands. Its reproductive power possesses considerable authenticity. From a practical point of view, the phonograph has even succeeded as a substitute for great performances, to hear which the listener no longer need go abroad; at

home, in his armchair, he can hear the grandest masterpieces of the art executed by their most skilled interpreters in fullest array. This was never dreamt of by Marie-Antoinette, who, immured in her dim, private apartments in the château, contented herself by way of diversion with the operation of her music-box, whose tenuous tones evoked a memory of her favorite composers, Grétry, Martini, and Gluck. After all, this was a stepping-stone on the road toward modern achievement. And just as our successors will be able a century hence, thanks to the discs, to hear the very timbres of the voices of our illustrious singers, and to cause the mighty riches of our orchestras to resound, thus reviving in their minds a memory of what, for them, will be a past age, in like manner have we ourselves only yesterday listened with curiosity and rare emotion to the thin, far-away tones of these forgotten ariettes, and caught in them a direct echo of music that of yore, in the France that was, gave forth its pleasant tinkle.

*(Translated by Theodore Baker)*

## CHOPIN AND JENNY LIND

(London, 1848)

By MARTIAL DOUËL

CHOPIN'S long sojourn in France, begun a hundred years ago by his unheralded arrival in Paris at the end of September, 1831, was to be interrupted but once. In April, 1848, fleeing the revolution which upset all his ideas, and yielding to the increasingly urgent wish of his Scotch friends, Jane Stirling and her sister Mrs. Erskine, who watched over him with such solicitude, Chopin, already very ill, departed for London. He stayed there four full months. Comfortably installed with his faithful servant Daniel in a costly apartment in Dover Street, he soon was lionized by all of English high-society, Miss Stirling in the lead. A series of private concerts in the most exclusive houses of the British capital—*chez* Mrs. Sartoris,<sup>1</sup> Lord Falmouth, the Duchess of Sutherland (in the presence of Queen Victoria), Lord Douglas, Lady Gainsborough—invitations to the most brilliant receptions of the London season, and a few choice pupils, quickly placed him in the foreground of artistic fame and fashion; and his letters of the time show how very sensible he was of all these attentions and suggest that this summer of 1848, which was to be his next-to-last, provided him with some of the best hours of his too brief and breathless existence.

One of the most curious episodes of this London visit concerns his meetings with Jenny Lind, the celebrated Swedish singer, herself recently come to London, where her voice was the talk of the town. Born in Stockholm in 1820, she was then in the full flower of her talent which had everywhere won her enthusiastic acclaim. She had been trained partly in her native city, partly in Paris, whither she went to take lessons of the celebrated Garcia. Despite a trial singing which was much talked about in its day, she did not obtain an engagement at the Paris opera; she never forgave this to the French capital, and never consented to sing there in later years. She went to Berlin on the advice of Meyerbeer, who had her create there the part of Vielka in his opera "Das Feldlager in Schlesien" and always showed her the warmest sympathy. Drawn to London in 1847 by Edward Lewin and his sister Mrs. Koch, English friends whom she had known in Stockholm, she made

<sup>1</sup>Fanny Kemble.

remarkable débuts at the Queen's Theatre in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *l'Elisire d'amore*. She had become intimate with her friend's sister, Mrs. Grote, who occupied a privileged position in London society. Wife of an historian of ancient Greece who was a member of Parliament and a man of wealth, Mrs. Grote had a most curious salon where practically all worlds met, artists as well as savants and politicians, and which was quite assiduously frequented by, among others, John Stuart Mill, Carlyle and his wife, Cornwall Lewis, Sidney Smith, not to mention Thalberg, Lablache, and, during his visits to London, Mendelssohn himself (who had only just died).

At the moment when Chopin, freshly arrived from France, was trying to find ways of earning enough to pay his expenses and to maintain himself in a state befitting his position in English society, all the talk was of Jenny Lind's recent appearance at the Queen's Theatre, where she was now to sing Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, one of her most touching impersonations. Highly sensational in itself, the event was chosen as the occasion for a political demonstration of loyalty to Queen Victoria, who, in reply to the attacks of the opposition, had announced her desire to appear before her subjects on the night of this première and thus permit them to show their fidelity in a spectacular manner. All of which goes to prove to what point public curiosity must have been excited by this double gala, and what difficulty Chopin must have experienced in realizing his wish to be present, both to hear this singer, everywhere the recipient of such extraordinary praise, and to see the Queen surrounded by a dazzling Court.

Though doubled and even tripled in price, the seats had been bought out the moment they were put on sale. Chopin had begun to despair of getting one, when—someone having advised him to seek an invitation to a box—he remembered that he had met, at his friend Madame de Martiani's in Paris, this very Mrs. Grote who was mentioned to him as one of the opera-subscribers most cordial to artists. Without hesitation he drove to her house, where he found the excellent old lady *tête-à-tête* with a charming young woman of distinctly Nordic blondness: Jenny Lind herself.

Mrs. Grote, whom Chopin describes in one of his letters as a sort of virago, whose bass voice, blunt manner, and frank speech were at first a little disconcerting, was in reality the best of women and the most devoted of friends. She promptly found the right words to make Jenny Lind understand what great artist and gentleman was being presented to her, and to reassure Chopin that a hearty welcome awaited him wherever he deigned to appear. So

the ice was soon broken: not five minutes had passed before Chopin attained his end, finding himself invited to Mrs. Grote's box for the great evening, while Jenny Lind congratulated herself on counting him among those of her auditors whose approval would be beyond price. Then the usual visitors arrived and put Chopin to flight; but Jenny Lind, who was almost like a daughter in her old friend's house, accompanied him to the door. He seized the opportunity to ask her confidentially where Mrs. Grote's box was; he showed keen disappointment on learning that it was one flight up: for some time already the increasingly precarious state of his health had forbidden him stairs, and it would be impossible for him to accept Mrs. Grote's invitation.

Chopin had scarcely got into his carriage when Jenny Lind sent an urgent note to Lumley, director of the Queen's Theatre, telling him the facts and begging him to bethink himself in haste; he so eagerly sought to meet her wish that Chopin, returning home a little later, found an envelope addressed to him containing an excellent orchestra seat "from Mr. Lumley, with the compliments of Mrs. Grote and Miss Jenny Lind." Caught short, Lumley had sent his own seat!

Jenny Lind, with all of her youthful appeal and brilliance, sang the role of *Amina* for the first time before an English public; Queen Victoria, herself in all the splendor of her nine-and-twenty years, received immense applause: no doubt, the evening must have enchanted Chopin. Scarcely installed in the British capital, he found himself plunged in the brilliant *mêlée* of its artistic and social life, made much of by members of the most exclusive of aristocracies and, furthermore, the object of particular attentions which must have meant to him even more.

Neither the composer himself nor the English biographers of Jenny Lind have left us any information about the call Chopin must have made on Mrs. Grote after that evening. Everything points to the probability that he did not delay; also to the fact that, less fortunate than the first time, he did not meet the singer there. He must have expressed his regret to Mrs. Grote, who was touched by it and took it upon herself to repair this injustice on the part of fate; for we know that, soon after, she invited Chopin to spend an evening at her house with Jenny Lind, and that upon this occasion, in the closest intimacy and conformity of tastes, they had, between nine in the evening and one in the morning, four hours of music such as only these two—the composer of the *Ballades* and the remarkable songstress—might make for each other.

Chopin forgot his physical miseries and must have thrown his whole soul into the playing of those masterpieces to which he could still do justice; for the decline of his strength more and more prevented him from undertaking works that required power. But this loss of strength he tried to hide under greater expression and richer sonority which delighted his listeners, though it left them with a singular sense of sadness. As for the "Swedish nightingale", we have Chopin's own account of the profound impression she made upon him as an artist and as a woman. The artist he found most individual, full of a peculiar and very Swedish charm, unequal but often admirable; and we know that this evening ended with Jenny singing songs of her own country in which she was beyond compare, and a set of *Polskas*,<sup>2</sup> written on popular Polish airs, for which he did not know how to thank her. As to the woman: although in his correspondence Chopin speaks of her as "not pretty, but pleasant-looking off the stage"—an expression which some of her portraits would quite well explain, though to judge from certain others it seems severe—we may suppose that he nevertheless found her more interesting than he admits; for in his letters we see him absorbed in everything that concerns her, who at that time was vaguely reported engaged—to that very brother of Mrs. Grote, Edward Lewin, who in Stockholm had persuaded her to seek a singer's glory in London. Unfortunately Chopin, already very ill and disheartened, was too much preoccupied with his health to abandon himself to a new and tender attachment; and Jenny could not prevail. This seems to have somewhat surprised the worthy and eccentric Mrs. Grote: for presently, after Chopin had given his first two private concerts—at Mrs. Sartoris's on June 23rd and at Lord Falmouth's on July 7th—the good lady felt obliged to confide to him that Jenny Lind, though she had never yet sung in the London social world, was quite ready to infringe this rule for Chopin and had been waiting for him to ask her. Chopin had not even thought of it, "despite all our mutual good will and excellent understanding!" Jenny did not take offense. She scrupulously attended all the concerts her friend Chopin gave in London; and he in turn knew how to appreciate this gesture of hers, which he considered "of great importance to the imbeciles," and hence for the material success of his concerts, pointing out that "she cannot show herself anywhere without all lorgnettes being trained on her."

Their friendship, the obligations which her attentions imposed upon him, naturally led to his calling on her at Clairville Cottage,

<sup>2</sup>"*Polskas* are dances of Polish origin, popular in Sweden, whose introduction dates from the time of the union of the crowns of Sweden & Poland in 1587" (Niecks).



the pleasant country-place she lived at, just out of London. We do not know whether these visits were frequent, but an echo of the first comes to us through Chopin's own mention of it in a letter to his friend Grzymala: "I have also made the acquaintance of Jenny Lind in person. When a few days later I called upon her, she received me most kindly and sent me a very comfortable seat for the Opera where I heard very well." And he goes on to say: "She is a typical Swede; not in an ordinary light, but in some sort of Polar dawn. She is enormously effective in *Sonnambula*. She sings with extreme purity and certainty, and her piano notes are steady, and as even as a hair."<sup>3</sup>

These two were born to understand each other. One can easily imagine what must have been their mutual satisfaction in these few intimate meetings—peers in their art, yet so tragically divided in their destinies: she, barely entered upon a long and glorious career; he, bruised by life and already in the grip of death, finding solace only when inspiration raised him above his sufferings.

These meetings were without a morrow... Summer come, the season over, Jenny Lind set sail for Stockholm, and Chopin went to stay with an uncle of his Scotch friends, the Stirlings, in the green highlands. In the late autumn of 1848, Chopin merely passed through London on his way back to France, shortly to enter upon the slow agony that came to an end in the last fine days of the following year, on October 17, 1849.

*(Translated by M. D. Herter Norton)*

<sup>3</sup>From "Chopin—Collected Letters", New York, A. A. Knopf, 1931.

## THE CRADLE OF THE PARSIFAL LEGEND

By MAX UNGER

FOR the distinction of possessing the sacred fastness of Monsalvat many states have contended, just as many cities have for the fame of being Homer's birthplace. Its location has been sought in the Pyrenees and central Spain, in southern England, northwestern Africa, and Arabia; and not many years ago a German investigator claimed he had discovered it in the ruin of Wildenberg in the Bavarian Odenwald, forasmuch as he, besides finding certain resemblances to Wolfram von Eschenbach's description, translated Wolfram's "Muntsalvatsche", not by the traditional *Mons salvationis*, but as "Mont sauvage" (*Mons silvaticus*). But even the derivation from a *Mons salvationis* was incorrect. For the highly contentious problem is now, as will be explained, definitively solved; and the sanctuary is to be sought in a very different place from any hitherto supposed. Furthermore, not only is the veil withdrawn from this mystery, but nearly all regions, persons, occurrences, and symbols involved in the story are at last clearly identified. The proofs to be given in what follows will convince the reader of the truth of this statement.

For most writers on the history of literature and on Wagner's works it has hitherto been settled that the medieval "court poetry" of the Arthurian cycle of legends was Celtic in origin. Various investigators who have sought to read Oriental influences into Wolfram's *Parzival*—e.g., Josef von Gorres, the Schlegel brothers, and more recently Leopold von Schroeder, Franz Rolf Schroeder, *et al.*—have so far met with scant success. Indeed, beyond pointing out certain Oriental turns of expression, they have never succeeded in bringing forward really convincing proofs, notably such as cover details. This distinction has been earned only within the last few years by the orientalist Dr. Fridrich von Suhtscheck of Graz. Through his admirable researches, the conclusions of which rest on unshakable proofs, he has placed a whole literary epoch on a new footing. Dr. von Suhtscheck was the first to bring to light the Oriental sources that served as prototypes for *Parzival*—sources which not only parallel that epos in conception, but in which the very names are quite or almost literally repeated. The

poem in question is the Persian epic, until now well-nigh ignored in world literature.<sup>1</sup>

Recently the prominent Viennese scholar Josef Strzygowski, has set forth the significance of Iran in the field of esthetics; and now Fridrich von Suhtscheck has demonstrated the correspondence between Persian and Occidental poetry. He made his first discovery in this connection in 1924. After several years' interruption, he continued his investigations, reporting to the Orientalist Conventions at Bonn (1928) and Vienna (1930). At present he is writing a book on the subject. It has been my privilege to participate in this work, as a painter by avocation, in supervising the illustrations; and being deeply interested in these important discoveries, I have acquired a certain familiarity with them. Those points which seem to me to have most bearing on Wolfram's *Parzival*, I shall briefly present here.

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As the expositor of his *Parzival* poem Wolfram von Eschenbach explicitly names, in the poem itself, one "Kyot den Provensalen." That this personage was a native of Provence in France had already been doubted by San Marte (Dr. Albert Schulz), the first translator of the epic into modern High German. Suhtscheck has now identified Kyot with an Armenian by the name of Giut, who was probably a priest, and who about 1155 made a French translation of a *Pârsiwalnâmâ* (Parsiwal Story).<sup>2</sup> Wolfram himself calls the true author a "Flegetanis" (astronomer) As Wolfram likewise reveals, Giut had discovered the original version, in neo-Persian, in the "Dolet ze Spane." Now, this Dolet does not, as hitherto supposed, mean "Toledo in Spain," but Dolât chanâ chas, the Persian designation of Royal Castle; and for Spane we should read Ispahan, in earlier times always called Spahan or Spaan. In fact, Spain does not enter in question at all, for she did not come into being until Charles V ascended the throne in 1516; so that Wolfram would properly have had to designate the king "Kailet" (kai=king in neo-Persian) of "Spane" at "Dolet" (which he called "Spanol") as a "Castilian", and Spane itself as "Castile".

<sup>1</sup>How little it has been known appears in the fact that in the great scientific work "Kultur der Gegenwart" of the Leipzig publishing house of B. G. Teubner, as against 467 pages devoted to Greco-Latin literature and 187 pages to Celtic literature, just 25 are allotted to the Persian.

<sup>2</sup>To avoid confusion Dr. Unger's spellings have been adhered to throughout, Parsifal being the modern German form, Parzifal that of Wolfram, Parsiwal (accent on last syllable) representing the Persian, although presumably the English pronunciation would give z the sound of ts, v the sound of f, and w that of v.—Translator's note.

These Persian epics were brought to France by the Crusaders. Thus it happened that about 1180 the German count Philipp von Lothringen-Flandern lent the "court littérateur" Chrétien de Troyes the "Livre del graal" in Giut's translation. We do not know from whom Wolfram received the French version. But while Chrétien fabricated a modish adaptation in freest style that is of slight value as an aid to research, Wolfram made a translation which strictly conforms to the original and seldom deviates from it.

The original author of the Grail Book, whom Wolfram calls Flegetanis, utilized several Persian legends dating from about 600. By transmuting the sacred personages of the original legends into romantic knights, he modernized the tales for his own time. For this modernization he took as model a grand epic from the end of the eleventh century, the *Barzu-Namä*, the story of a knight named Barzu. With this poem, wherein the hero sets forth to win his beautiful beloved, the principal incidents of several books of Wolfram's version agree, but there is as yet no relation to the Grail legend. As the nucleus of his work the "astronomer" took a Manichean legend which first appears in the Syrian *Pearl Song*, and it is through this legend that the subject acquired one of its most characteristic features: the symbol of the Grail; for the word *Grail* is derived neither from the Latin *gradalis* (supposedly alluding to Parzival's gradual purification), nor from the Greek *krater* (a mixing vessel or crater, a meaning the Grail did not have at Wolfram's time), but from the Persian *gohar*=*gohr*=*ghr*, signifying pearl or, later (as with Wolfram) gem, and *al*, the word for coruscating color. The Grail is the loftiest pearl, the loftiest gem, of the Mount of Light. Now, the pearl (or gem) represents a celebrated Manichean symbol, the coruscations of which possess various meanings. Primarily the pearl, i.e., the Grail itself, stands for compassion; and with this attribute is combined a second which signifies the dispensing of food and drink, wealth, power, realization of desire, invisibility for heroes, averting of death and disease, etc.—properties which are taken over into Wolfram's version of the original *Pârsiwalnâmä*, and to some extent also into Wagner's music-drama. Suhtscheck collected a full forty passages from Manichean literature touching this symbol of the pearl. In one, compassion is "the pearl of price that is called the 'bright moon,' which is the first among all jewels." The Manicheans, indeed, recognized compassion as the first virtue. Thus the Grail in *Parzival* likewise became the symbol of compassion.

Let us consider the events described by Wolfram von Eschenbach in their proper setting, the Iranian world forming the scene

of the original *Parsiwal*. The names of persons (as some have not yet been explained, and because they may be more familiar) will be given in Wolfram's spelling; geographical names appear as far as possible in the original oriental form.<sup>3</sup> The reader, with finger on map, will no longer be misled by the place-names mentioned by Wolfram and his successors, but will obtain a correct idea of the scene of action. Here, for the first time, the various regions are presented in perspicuous relation.

Suhtscheck compares the epos to a great intaglio of Persian legends. Its most extended, chief, and central section forms the greater part of the Parzival Story proper, down to the passage where the hero despairs of God because, despite the best of good will, he has pursued the wrong way in whatever he has tried. Around this central portion the original author set many other legends and stories. Most prominent among these are, first, the knightly quests of Parzival's father, Gahmuret, which occupy the initial portion of the poem (the first two books); and second, the exploits of Parzival's cousin Gawan, which are affixed to the six books comprising the central section.

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Briefly summarized the principal events run as follows:

Gahmuret, the father of Parzival, is in the service of Baruch of Bagdad (the authenticated pseudonym for Zoroaster). After winning great fame for deeds of arms against Babylon, he embarks for the long trip to Patela, and safely arrives at this ancient Indian port, where the Moorish queen Belacane reigns over Zazamanek (Stutterer Land). She is besieged by the Schughda, a tribe whose country lies to the northwest of her realm. Gahmuret enters her service, swiftly compels her enemies to conclude a peace, and thereafter is united with Belacane. Soon he yearns for fresh adventures, and furtively departs from his beloved. The hapless queen, thus deserted, is delivered of a black-and-white-spotted son, Feirefiss. Meantime Gahmuret is on his way to Dolet, capital of the realm of Ispahan, intending to visit his cousin, King Kaylet; but on learning that he has set forth to attend the grand tournament at Kanvoleis in the Land of Wals (Turkestan), he follows him thither. Here Queen Herzeloyde has vowed to bestow her heart and hand on the foremost champion. Gahmuret wins brilliant success in the tournament, and, despite the woe in his heart for Belacane, becomes affianced to the queen. Again summoned by Baruch to combat Babylon, he hastens to his aid, but is treacherously slain.

Herzeloyde gives birth to a goodly son, whom she brings up in a lonely wilderness, that he too may not become a knight. Approaching man's estate,

<sup>3</sup>Geographical names are given in capital letters; Wolfram's spellings follow in parentheses. Our sketch of the map confines itself to the regions forming the stage for the Parzival legend proper; among the towns lying further to the west, such as Ispahan, Bagdad, and Babylon, which are involved more particularly in the Introduction, the Story of Gahmuret, the reader can easily find his way on any small map of Asia.

young Parzival encounters a small party of knights, and instantly the desire awakens in his breast to be like them. His mother arrays him in the garb of a fool and he hastens forth, provided by her with some practical rules of conduct. But on his departure she dies heartbroken.

Withersoever he turns his steps, Parzival in his simple-mindedness brings down woe and disgrace upon others. At last he comes to Nantou, where Artus holds court, and seeks admission to his knightly train. But when Kunneware, the sister of a certain Duke of Landi, cannot help laughing at his strange apparel, and gets a beating therefor, Parzival rides away in high dudgeon. Before the gate tarries Ither, king of the realm of Chumar, who plans to oust Artus from the land of Bertan. Parzival would fain possess himself of his armor, and a combat ensues; Ither falls, and the victor buckles on the armor over his fool's garb. Then he finds his way somewhere in Hindukusch to the castle of Gurnemanz, and receives his instructions. Gurnemanz enjoins him, above all, not to ask too many questions. He may well have desired the dashing knight for a son-in-law, but does not succeed in detaining him.

Parzival now reaches a (fictitious) kingdom, Brobarz, whose capital, Pelrapeire, is besieged by one King Klamide, because the Queen, Konduiramur, has refused him her hand. Our youthful hero speedily overcomes both the king and his seneschal in single combat, but shows himself magnanimous on condition that they betake themselves to Artus' court to defend the honor of Kunneware; he himself espouses Konduiramur. The vanquished fulfill the charge and appear before Artus in Din-azad-run during a court festival. For a time Parzival lives with Konduiramur in happy unity; then he takes leave of absence to visit his mother, of whose death he has received no tidings.

Now a new path of trial opens before him. In Kuh-i Kouadja, the stronghold of King Anfortas, who has been punished with twofold and threefold afflictions, for his relations with a Parika, Parzival witnesses the ceremony of the Grail: Tables for four hundred knights are set up in the hall; in solemn procession twenty-four virgins carry forward a table-frame and candles, and finally their queen appears with the Holy Grail, which dispenses food and drink. To Parzival is presented a superb sword, but, with Gurnemanz's injunction fresh in mind, he does not dare ask. And so he is discourteously dismissed, and on his way to King Artus' court must bear the reproaches of his cousin Sigune. At this time the court is held not far from the river Helmand. When near the camp, Parzival has a strange vision: A goose that has been attacked by a falcon lets fall into the snow three drops of blood. Reminded of the rosy cheeks and chin of his beloved Konduiramur, Parzival stands fascinated at sight of the blood. Two knights from Artus' camp fancy that he seeks a quarrel. Parzival accepts the challenge and unhorses both his adversaries. But the fascination of the blood-drops is still strong upon him. Thereupon his cousin Gawan appears, divines the cause of Parzival's abstraction, covers up the blood-drops, and leads him to King Artus. Parzival meets with a glad welcome, and on the flowery meadow by the Helmand a Round Table festival is arranged in honor of the newly received member of the knightly order. Now enters Kundrie, messenger of the Grail, with the direful announcement that the Round Table is dishonored by the reception of Parzival; for although he had indeed witnessed the miracle of the Grail, he had failed to ask the question. And she also summons the assembled knights to free four hundred virgins and four queens from durance in Clinschor's enchanted castle. The youthful hero is profoundly agitated, for he knows of no wrong that he has done. Thinking to have followed faithfully all instructions and won high honors, he



has only brought down the wrath of God upon his head. He renounces his membership of the Round Table and will now, bearing Konduiramur as guardian angel in his heart, attempt in spite of all to win the Grail.

Here the action is interrupted by the Story of Gawan. The Landgrave of Schanpanzun,<sup>4</sup> by order of King Vergulat of Azagonc, challenges the cousin of Parzival to single combat, he being assumed guilty of assassination. Gawan sets out, encounters various adventures on the way, and reaches Vergulat's realm. The king later realizes that he has wronged Gawan with his suspicions, but charges him with a vow that he himself had made when vanquished by Parzival, to seek the Grail.

Parzival also is seeking the Grail. Again he visits in passing his cousin Sigune, who advises him to ride in pursuit of Kundrie, who has just taken leave of her. On the way he fights a Knight-Templar, whose horse he appropriates, then meets the aged knight Kahenis with his wife and two daughters, who are on a pilgrimage to the sacred Lake of Hamun to celebrate the festival of the spring equinox (or Good Friday, as Wolfram has it). When Parzival confesses that he has renounced God, the aged man shows him the way to the hermit Trevezent. The hermit enlightens him concerning the grace of God and informs him at length about the Grail, to which on every Good Friday a dove descends from heaven bearing a holy wafer which renews its divine power to dispense food and drink, eternal youth, and immortality. A humble heart alone may win the Grail. Anfortas, who had been wounded by a heathen from t-Nisiï with a poisoned spear, can be healed only when some knight shall ask, without being exhorted thereto, the cause of his suffering. After fourteen days filled with devout converse, Trevezent grants absolution to Parzival on his departure. Through his humility alone may he be worthy of the Grail.

Meanwhile the quest of the shallower Gawan has been vain. This knight is better fitted to liberate the four hundred virgins and four queens from Clinschor's enchanted castle, where they are held in durance by Clinschor, Duke of Lahur, in revenge for the fact that he had been made impotent by the spouse of a queen with whom he had had a love-affair. Before Gawan penetrates to the castle of the sorcerer, near Kapischa, he meets with many adventures. He encounters Orgeluse, Dutchess of Logar, who at first derides him for a long time, but, after he has taken the castle and freed the prisoners, contritely explains the reasons for her conduct. On his way, besides, he loses his charger, acquiring instead the wretched jade of the dwarf Malkreature, brother of Kundrie; but he makes up for his loss in the sequel by his victory over a knight. Hard by the enchanted castle, that lies by a broad and swift-flowing river, certain merchants have stored a quantity of valuable goods. In the castle itself he again has various perturbing encounters—with a singular throne that dashes through the hall when one seats himself in it, a peasant armed with a club, a lion, etc.—whereby he is sadly mishandled; but under the tender ministrations of the women he soon recovers. After conquest of the enchanted castle and liberation of the women, Gawan unites himself with Orgeluse.

In the last three books Parzival is again the central figure. On his way to Kuh-i Kouadja clad in red armor, he fights with his cousin Gawan and his half-brother, Feirefiss, unrecognized by them. Arrived at the Mount of the Grail, he now asks Anfortas, "Uncle, what aileth thee?" Whereupon Anfortas is healed, and Parzival becomes King of the Grail. Konduiramur and Feirefiss likewise

<sup>4</sup>No clue has yet been found to the meaning of this name.

arrive at Kuh-i Kouadja; the latter is baptized, and introduces Christianity into India.

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To show how the *Pearl Song*, with its ancient Iranian conceptions, coincides with Wolfram's *Parzival*, let us bring together the principal subjects and incidents common to the two. In both, the hero, still very young and predestined to mighty exploits, goes forth into foreign lands, meanly attired. He knows not who was his father, is innocent of all religious gnosis, undergoes manifold experiences and sufferings; in his artlessness he neglects the question and forgets his mission: the conquest of the pearl (gem). But now he is instructed by Messengers of Light; is invested with cloak and sword, enters the abode of the celestials, sets the sufferer free and, himself redeemed, gains possession of the pearl (gem). These parallels alone should suffice to establish the intimate connection between the *Parzival* of supposedly Celtic provenance and the ancient oriental *Pearl Song*. But the plenitude of yet more striking proofs of the Iranian origin of *Parzival* will serve to convince the most skeptical.

The text on which Giut's French translation was founded is apparently not extant. Suhtscheck, doubtless correctly, recognized the title as Persian; it is only most astonishing that this was not realized sooner. The hero's name, the correct form of which is *Parsiwal*, was evidently (Suhtscheck assures us) invented by the unknown author himself. In this name is hidden the name of the people from which the poem sprang; hence *Parsiwal* does not signify, as Richard Wagner has it, "reiner Tor" (artless fool), nor, as Wolfgang Golther asserts, "Taldurchdringer" (invader of the valley), but "Persian flower", also pure, chaste flower. Suhtscheck was able to establish not only the original form of the hero's name, but also the names of most of the other important persons and places mentioned in Wolfram's poem. Supported by the wise counsels of Garonemani (*Gurnemanz*), *Tre-färzänd* (*Trevrezent*), and *Kahun* (*Ka-hen-is*), *Parziwal* is cleansed of religious incomprehension and other imperfections, and in the end sets free the mythical Avestan king *Na-far-Tus* (unfortunate *Tus*=*Anfortas*) from his "*Buschjansta*" (dream-sleep), his punishment for a love-affair with a non-Persian *Parika*. The royal residence of *Na-far-Tus* was *Kuh-i* (sal) *Kouadjá*<sup>5</sup> (Mount of the [old] King or the

<sup>5</sup>Accent on the last syllable. This is the anglicized spelling adopted by Josef Strzygowski in his deluxe work "*Asiens Kunst in Stichproben*" (published by Dr. Benno Filser, Augsburg, 1930), and corresponding most nearly to the German form, *Kuh-i-Chwadscha*, used by Suhtscheck.

[old] Lord), which Wolfram took over as "Muntsalvatsche".

*Montsalvat, therefore, to which the name of this kingly castle was in time corrupted, is situated not in the Pyrenees or in any other western-European region, but in Persia, where it in fact still stands, uninhabited, by the Lake of Hamun, near the border of Afghanistan.*

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The Parsiwal Story (*Pârsîwalnâmâ*) proper is the central and essential feature of the entire poem. From the original author down to Wolfram, the history of Parsiwal's father, Gahmuret, serves as a broad general introduction. The Persian tradition also tells of his life and exploits. He is identical with the early Iranian king Gamuhrt, who fights and lays down his life in the service of Baruch (Zoroaster). Thus he undertakes long journeys from Eski Bagdad to Ispahan and back again. (According to Wolfram, Parzival's father, Gahmuret, also goes forth on a knightly quest to the "heathenish" pope Baruch of Bagdad). Furthermore, the Gawan story appended to the body of the poem is shown by Suhtscheck to be a mere plagiarism of the legend of the famous hero Färidûn, widely popularized by the Persian poet Firdausi. His greatest legendary exploit, which is held in remembrance down to this day in the folklore of Afghanistan, was the stamping-out of the Buddhist religion in Kabulistan, the region northeast of our present scene of action. Here he captured a monastery of the Buddhist flagellants, founded a full 2000 years earlier by a certain king Kaneschki. The abbot, overlord of the entire surrounding district, is called Clinschor by Wolfram—a name that Suhtscheck holds to be derived from Chindschill-i Zor; "Chinschil" was the title of the sub-Shah of Kabul, and Zor is the son of Dahak (the Devil). Only this much, for the present, concerning Monsalvat and Klingsor's enchanted castle; we shall return to the subject in greater detail.

Of Parzival's half-brother Feirefiss we shall merely note that his name is properly Fairûz fiz, and that tradition marks him as the man who converted India—not to Christianity, but to the Parsi or Manichean faith. Wolfram's Kundrie is derived from Kundi. The second part of the name Lohr angerin (later corrupted to Lohengrin) bears various meanings, among them "dear guest", "messenger", "rescuer"; the first part, "Lohr", is to be interpreted by "red" or (after a different etymology) by "valiant" or "swift". King Artus is traced back to Arta Chusru ("pure king"); the whole

Arthurian legend goes back to the emperor Chusru, who freed eastern Iran from the white Huns (Ephthalites).

The scene of the legend is set in definite places in Afghanistan. Wolfram's "Bems an der Korca" is Bamian on the Karcu; his "Dianazadrun" is Din-azad-run; his "Nantes" is Nantu; "Loverland" is Luvarland; "Bertun" is Berdurani in the Ghor; etc. As Suhtscheck himself aptly declares, "Wolfram's poem is in fact the best German guide to Afghanistan," the scene of action of our poem, as Wolfram himself explicitly asserts.<sup>6</sup> When Wolfram incidentally mentions a Spanish or Austrian town, this can in every case be shown to be an incorrect reading for some Iranian place; we have to do, of course, simply with the translator's attempts to Europeanize the place-names of the original. The scenery itself, which serves as a frame for the action, is moreover endowed with an unmistakably oriental cast: the landscape shows cedars, olives, figs and pomegranate trees, besides other oriental growths. It is remarkable that no one ever noticed before that the rites of the Arthurian Round Table, as described by Wolfram, are quite unthinkable in Celtic countries and conceivable only in the Orient. In his version, for example, a carpet is spread upon the floor, and on this carpet the participants take their seats—i.e., with their legs crossed.

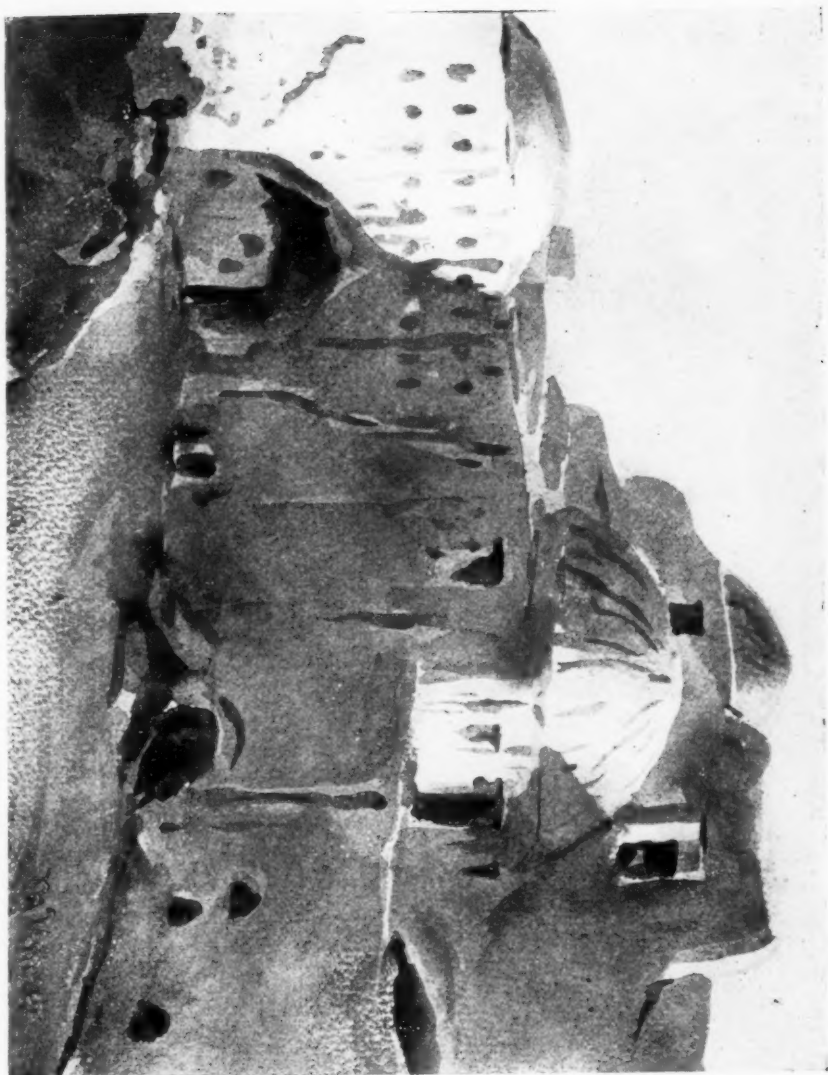
This is but one example of many. Not only the chief personages and incidents, the scenes and landscapes of the epic are already to be found in the ancient Persian poem, but also a thousand lesser details. Only the prototypes of the tales of Obilot and Antikonie, subordinate narratives in Books 7 and 8, have not as yet been identified; but on the internal evidence there is no doubt that they are likewise of Iranian origin.

Allusion has already been made to the borrowing of religious conceptions, naturally Christianized by Wolfram. We add a few details. The Scene of the Grail presents a ceremony of atonement<sup>7</sup> in conformity with astrological rules, many of which can be verified down to the least detail.

In *Parzival*, too, the bath is mentioned which the Parsi daughters were made to take in the sacred Lake of Hamun. With Wolfram, to be sure, the name of this lake is one of those not to be recognized at a glance: he calls it Brumbane. This word probably derives

<sup>6</sup> 767, 5, "disiu westerriche von Indien." Cf. "Forschungen und Fortschritte", Berlin, April 1, 1931.

<sup>7</sup> This has nothing to do with the popular cure applied when King Anfortas is in pain, which consists in burning with a spear, a procedure still employed at the present time against plague-boils, as witnessed by Sven Hedin during his stay in Sistan, the district in question, in 1906.



A corner in the upper town of the fortress of Kou-i-Koundja (Montsalvat), in Persia  
(From a sepia sketch by Dr. Max Unger)



Map of the region in which the action of the Parzival Legend takes place  
(Sketched by Dr. Max Unger)



from Barmû banâ, which signifies *custos expectationis*; it is the Lake of Hope, because out of it the Savior is born. The conception of the Savior, in any case, is genuinely Iranian. Christianity assuredly only borrowed it from Iran. The god Gahmuret dies the predestinate death of atonement; his son Parsiwal, son of god and man, consummates the atonement. Thus it is ultimately wrong to term the atonement idea "romantic;" and Suhtscheck designates Richard Wagner, with whom it plays so important a part, not as a "romanticist," but quite unreservedly as the "great, immortal Persian." With Wolfram the bath of the Parsi daughters relates to the passage where Parzival meets Kahun-is with two daughters making a Good Friday pilgrimage; the date is March 24th, two days before a great religious festival of the Persians, the so-called Naurôz-i buzurg festival.

Finally, a phenomenon peculiar to Wolfram's poem and never taken note of before: the epos is intentionally and precisely subdivided into stated periods; in the Gahmuret poem five holy days are allotted for the journey, in the stories of Parzival, Gawan, and Feirefiss each is allowed exactly thirteen days. Here again we have to deal with ancient Iranian religious ideas, i.e., sacred numbers. The Manichean conception of the series thirteen, in connection with a kind of earthly pilgrimage for the purpose of spiritual cleansing and redemption, is first discoverable in ancient Babylon. Here the several days of the journey are symbolized by gateways through which the pilgrim must pass. And now the surprising discovery is made, that these ancient Babylonian gateways connote happenings parallel with the very incidents detailed in Wolfram's *Parzival* poem and extending over thirteen days; incidents in most cases exactly similar, in some few intentionally the exact opposite. Details concerning these and other matters of interest in the original *Parsiwal* poem will soon be available in Suhtscheck's forthcoming book.

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Some particulars regarding the appearance and situation at least of the two most important castles of the original *Parsiwal* will be welcome. The fortress of Muntsalvatsche stood and still stands, as already mentioned, although sadly ruined, by the Lake of Hamun in Persia, near the border of Afghanistan; and both town and fortress are still called Kuh-i (sal) Kouadja. The wordlet "sal" (old) is not absolutely essential, being only an ornamental adjective.

Strzygowski<sup>5</sup> gives a fairly detailed description of the town and fortress Kuh-i Kouadja; and this without knowing that he was describing the fortress and town of Monsalvat. Shortly after his book was printed he became acquainted with Suhtscheck's investigations, being immediately convinced of their correctness. He describes the deserted site as follows: Approaching it from the lake one comes upon a fairly well preserved palace entrance-gate and enters a courtyard with arched passages in each corner and a special passage leading into a graveyard. Above this lower town there towers a castle (evidently not well preserved); on the way thither one passes a shrine belonging thereto, erected for the purpose of appeasing the wrath of heaven because of the damming of the river Helmand. The dead city itself lies still higher, on the very summit of the mount. It has been sadly ravaged by time; for it was built of clay or rough brick, and its walls and roofs are very dilapidated. "Shadowy outlines still stand forth, here and there a window or the arch of a vault." Strzygowski adds to his description three pictures from photographs, showing a part of the courtyard in the lower town, a general view of the upper town, and a peculiarly striking corner of this latter (a sketch of which by the present author is reproduced herewith). Here

one sees domes whose square foundations permit a guess at the construction of the funnel-shaped recess in the interior. Everywhere in gateways and windows both round and pointed arches are found, as well as horizontal copings. But wherever one looks, nothing but weather-worn clay; domes and walls are furrowed by rain. These ruins cannot be of specially ancient date, otherwise they would long since have been reduced to dust and mould, despite the dry climate. This fortification . . . is said to be a Sassanian settlement, crowned by a third-century fortress on the edge of the plateau, the whole having been the summer residence of the viceroy or king of Sistan.

As Strzygowski at the outset mentions a castle half-way up the mountain, it seems to me not yet wholly certain that the fastness here illustrated and just described, in the upper town, is the castle of King Na far Tus meant by the *Parsiwal* poet. The corner, however, has an effect of such grandeur and imposing magnificence, that one can easily conceive it to have been the scene of the adventures of the Grail; and Strzygowski's allusion to the "fortress on the edge of the plateau" tends only to confirm this view. Possibly the expedition to this region, planned for the present year (1932), may shed light on the subject by its excavations.

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Kuh-i (sal) Kouadja was a stronghold of Zoroastrian doctrine. That sundry features herefrom were taken over into the original

*Parsiwal* and further disseminated by Wolfram, has already been set forth. Here let us only point out, in addition, the historical genuineness of Wolfram's Grail Brethren, the "Templeisen"; these were "pure men", indwellers of Kuh-i Kouadja. Furthermore, some characteristics of the landscape: North of the fortified town, and not far from it, lies the ancient Persian fire-shrine of Karka; Wolfram calls this important holy place Karkobra. The river, too, that empties into the lake near Muntsalvatsche, is no poetic fiction. In reality it is called Helmand. Wolfram calls it Plimisol—one of the few names in his *Parzival*, as yet unexplained, which will probably some day be elucidated, like that of Brumbane. Even Wolfram's statement, that on account of inundations circuitous routes had to be taken to reach Karkobra, is correct; the explorer Herzfeld was obliged to make such a detour in 1925.

Other explorers as well, among them Sven Hedin and Marc Aurel Stein, passed by the "stronghold of the old master"; many also ascended it. In his "Zu Land nach Indien", the celebrated Swedish explorer minutely describes the Lake of Hamun and its environment. Early in April, 1906, he crossed it at the narrowest point from west to east, and then went past "Kuh-i-Chodscha" (as he spells the dead town) which lay east of it. As he did not ascend the mount he does not describe it; he only saw it through blue haze at a moderate distance, and speaks of it as a very low, regularly formed plateau. He notes that the water of the lake itself is light green, and fresh. The inhabitants of Namun were cattle-raisers camping in tents made of reed-mats; now and again they had to strike their tents, when the lake was forced over its low banks by the wind or atmospheric pressure, occasioning widespread inundations. Such changes in the lake-basin were forecast by the weather-wise among the people, and the tents would be promptly removed to a safer location. Hedin also tells of the vast inundations round about Kuh-i-chodscha, caused by the north wind. The storms often continue for from three to eight days. The lake is alive with fish, wild duck, and geese. For the rest, its shape is exactly similar to that of the large Austrian lake, the Burgenland Neusiedlersee near Vienna; only the Persian lake is about fifteen times as large. No explorer who has hitherto visited the Lake of Hamun, or even ascended the fortified mount, was aware of the historical significance of the region he was penetrating.

While the ruins—even if not the most important portions—of the castle of King Anfortas, disciple of Zoroaster, still stand, there is hardly a vestige left of the enchanted castle of Clinschor, the Klingsor of Richard Wagner. Yet we know where it was situated,

what were its plan and appearance, and several further details, and, above all, who was its overlord. From Sistan, as the entire Persian district having Kuh-i Kouadja as its mid-point is called, the Zoroastrian religious teachings were spread abroad. Zoroaster himself is said to have taught here, the region of the globe at present most abounding in ruins. Whereas in the extended central division of Wolfram's poem the Zoroastrian Muntsalvatsche figures as the scene of action, the subsequent parts take place further northeastward, namely, in Kabulistan, the Buddhistic corner of Iran. The paired contradictions of the Wagnerian poem: Amfortas-Klingsor, Monsalvat-Zauberschloss (enchanted castle), Christianity-heathen magic, derive ultimately from the antithesis between Zoroastrian doctrine and Buddhism. Kabulistan, however, was not merely an important centre of the Buddhistic religion; it was, besides, the hub of Asiatic commerce: for from here the trade-routes stretched away to the four points of the compass. Even in Wolfram we read of the "reichen Kram" (rich wares) there dealt in. In this region some 2000 years ago King Kaneschki founded his capital Kapischa (Wolfram's Kaps) containing a Buddhist monastery. His son—made into a dangerous sorcerer by the inimical attitude of the *Parsiwal* poet, who also in passing bestowed on him the title of Son of the Devil—governed a district having an eight-mile radius from this monastery of Jen-kia-l-an. In all probability this spiritual dignitary was an altogether reputable personality. In the Middle High German poem, Gawan, Parzival's cousin, enters Clinschor's castle and sets free 400 women. (How this act is to be understood we shall explain later).

Wolfram saw to it, with his faithful remodeling of the *Parsifal* poem, that we still get a realistic idea of the original aspect of Clinschor's fastness, and thus of Klingsor's enchanted castle. The great quadripartite structure stood on the farther side of a broad, swift, navigable river (the Kabulruds). The main building (Palas) had many windows, out of which gazed 400 or more women, who could be seen, however, only from outside; Gawan could find none in the interior. The pillars between the windows of the Palas were decked with chiselled ornaments; the dome-shaped roof, ascending stepwise, spread out with the brilliancy of a peacock's plumage. In this roof, too, were numerous windows adorned with semi-precious stones. Above the dome towered a great pillar; the main building itself stood on a moundlike foundation. These are merely the chief features of the structures as gleaned from Wolfram's far more detailed description. A well-known Orientalist to whom Suhtscheck sent a sketch of the Palas reconstructed from

Wolfram's account (see our illustration), immediately recognized the architectural type as that of a Buddhistic stupa. Such stupa, or topes, may be found from Kabulistan, following the valley of the Kabul river, down into India. They are edifices of circular ground-plan with dome-shaped superstructure bearing a great gilded pillar on the peak, glazed tiles (hence the likening of our Palas to a peacock's plumage), and other decorations; the numerous windows mentioned by Wolfram are to be interpreted as niches occupied by clay figures (the mysterious women). And probably because of these women the original author of the Parsifal story linked the ancient Persian Bahak legend (Devil legend) with the Gawan legend. But according to this latter, the 400 women confined in the enchanted castle would have been several hundred monks! Thus may religious influences and poetic conceptions transform the intent of individuals and institutions.

The monastery building of Kapischa was destroyed in 792 by the Arabs. Magic paraphernalia à la Klingsor are still to be seen in the museum at Lahore.

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Lost in wonder, one can only ask oneself how it was possible that the truth concerning the origin of *Parzival* could so long remain hidden. The sole explanation lies in the fact that the literature of Persia had hitherto been entirely ignored. The transplanting of the scene of action to Celtic soil was due to the parochialism of Celtic patriots, chiefly the translator of fairy tales, Guest, and the French literary historian, Théodore de la Villemarqué. The entry of Iranian literary values into Western European literature, however, is not confined (as noted previously) to *Parzival*; for Suhtscheck succeeds in instancing no fewer than forty West-European poems of that period the origins of which are traceable to Iranian influences. The subject of Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*, for example, is to be found in ancient Persian legends—a fact, by the way, to which attention was called many years ago<sup>8</sup>—the two chief characters of the Tristan legend being named, in ancient Persian, Trist-Ram and W-Is-ot. After the momentous researches of Suhtscheck the full truth cannot long remain concealed. Of the entire so-called "höfische Poesie" (court poetry) nothing is left that is not traceable to Iranian sources; Suhtscheck

<sup>8</sup>The earliest researches herein were published in 1869 by K. H. Graf in the *Zeitschrift* of the German Oriental Society, followed in 1887 by Hermann Ethé's article on "Die höfische romantische Poesie der Perser", Zenker again taking up the subject in Vol. 29 of the "Romanische Forschungen" for the year 1911.

even proposes to show such oriental influences in more recent European legendary lore, e.g., down to the Barbarossa Saga, and to Dante and Goethe.

Parsifal a figure from Zoroastrian times! Who is not instantly reminded of the opposed cosmic conceptions of Wagner and Nietzsche? Is it not remarkable that the great music-dramatist with his Parsifal and the philosopher with his Zarathustra were pulling, so to speak, on the same rope, and yet fell out over this ancient, originally Persian epic? Wolfram von Eschenbach bore a part in their quarrel, in that, following the spirit of his time, he converted Iranian conceptions and usages into Christian types.

*(Translated by Theodore Baker)*



## THE ART OF THE SYMPHONIC POEM

By R. W. S. MENDEL

THE form of art known as the symphonic poem is comparatively recent in origin and differs in this respect from most other kinds of musical composition. For however widely we may agree that modern symphonies—those of Elgar, Sibelius, and Bax, for instance—differ in structure and character from those of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, they are still symphonies, and the operas of Wagner and his successors, broad though the gap is which separates them from those of Monteverdi, Gluck, Mozart, Weber, and Meyerbeer, in successive ages, are none the less links in a single chain; the oratorios of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are very different affairs from those of Handel in one generation and Mendelssohn in another, yet we recognise them as lineal descendants; and even the short piano pieces of Chopin may be said to be able to trace their ancestry back to the preludes of Bach and Couperin's "pièces de clavecin". But the symphonic poem was born into the world as a new creation in the nineteenth century, and there are reasons for holding that it has not yet reached the zenith of its development.

It is easier to describe its nature than to define it in a few words. It is an orchestral composition inspired by a literary, historical, or pictorial subject—or indeed by anything which exists also outside music (a natural scene, for instance)—and deriving its structure rather from the events or incidents or objects which it seeks to portray than from the inherited forms of the art of music itself. Whereas the motions and adventures of the themes in a symphony or a sonata are governed largely by the traditional structure (however much an independent genius such as Beethoven or his successors may modify or expand the form to suit the needs of the case), it is the order of events in the story that mainly prescribes the way in which the music of a symphonic poem is to go.

By ascribing the term "symphonic poem" to an orchestral composition based on any subject which also has an existence apart from music, we are employing a very wide definition, though it is hard to see how we can narrow it down without excluding such a work as Bax's "November Woods", which relates to no definite pictorial scene but is descriptive of any woods in late

autumn, and yet is undoubtedly a symphonic poem. The wideness of the definition admittedly includes music which is simply expressive of generalised emotions, seeing that the latter exist independently of music. There is, however, really no reason why such a composition should not be called a symphonic poem, provided that its structure is determined by the subject-matter rather than by the traditional forms of musical art. The term would be applicable, for instance, to a work which is given by its creator the title of "Anger" or "Sorrow" or "Love" and is intended to portray one of those emotions, and which, whether or not it possesses a thematic unity, follows the dictates of its own subject-matter and, as it were, generates its own structure, instead of adhering to one of the purely musical forms such as that of the first movement of a sonata, or a fugue, or a theme and variations. It would be illogical to withhold the title "symphonic poem" from such a work, while applying it to "November Woods"; for the only genuine distinction between them is that the latter depicts a piece of the material world, whereas the composition which we have visualised relates to the emotional sphere, and this difference affords no ground for calling the one a symphonic poem and the other not.

It is true that the portrayal of emotions, characters, scenes or events, which exist also apart from music, is a feature likewise of the majority of overtures and of most movements of symphonies from the later days of Mozart onwards. But the essential distinction between these and a symphonic poem is one of structure. The first movement of Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony", though it describes something outside music, namely the pleasant feelings aroused in a man on arrival in the country, avoids being a symphonic poem in two ways: in the first place, it is itself only a part of a whole, though separate from the other portions: secondly, it is written in the traditional form, with exposition containing first and second subjects, development, recapitulation, and coda. The overtures to "Egmont" and "Coriolan" are nearer to being symphonic poems, because, though they are in accordance with the established "first movement" or "overture" plan, they are complete works in themselves, in spite of the fact that each was intended as the prelude to a play, and they are certainly "poetic" and not absolute music. To the prelude to "Tristan und Isolde", if it were not part of a much larger whole consisting of the entire opera, the term "symphonic poem" would be applicable, seeing that it embodies the emotional essence of the story in an original,

though closely unified, structure, which was wrought in Wagner's brain by the subject itself and not imposed upon him by traditional usage.

In one respect the "Coriolan" and "Egmont" overtures approximate more closely to being symphonic poems than "Leonora No. 3" does, because in them the formal structure, though following the inherited model, does not contest against the poetic ideas. In both of them, the composer is representing a spiritual struggle in universalised form, whereas in "Leonora No. 3" he portrays the actual narrative of the drama up to a point but departs from it in one important respect—that the recapitulation, which musical tradition impelled him to introduce after the Minister's trumpet calls and the prayer of thanksgiving, does not fit in with the order of events in the story. In the "Coriolan" and "Egmont" overtures, on the other hand, there is no such conflict between poetic content and musical form, because no attempt is made to present the dramatic incidents of the play, and the composer therefore found it possible to effect a perfect marriage between the spiritual ideas and the traditional structure of a classical overture. In "Coriolan" the notion of a brave man who courts death rather than abandon his freedom of will, is treated in a generalised fashion without reference to scenes or events. The "Egmont" overture typifies a hero who is oppressed on earth but attains a glorious freedom in death. The representation of such themes could be wedded to the established plan of an overture without incongruity. Wagner regarded the occurrence of the recapitulation in "Leonora No. 3" as a flaw, because it, so to speak, interfered with the dramatic sequence: it is not, however, necessary to take this view, since it is possible to believe that Beethoven intended that overture to be only partially narrative in character. Nevertheless, the difference between his treatment of the story of Leonora in the 2nd and 3rd overtures of that name shows that he was hovering between two alternative forms, and merits attention here, because it bears on the origin of the symphonic poem.

Beethoven in his maturity never hesitated to alter the strict forms of musical structure which he had inherited from his predecessors, if he found that the spiritual or emotional needs of his creation demanded it. The replacement of the old minuet by a scherzo, the increased number of repetitions in the third movements of the Fourth and Seventh symphonies, the transference of the customary order of movements in which he often indulged, the enlargement of the slow introduction in those same two sym-

phonies, the immense enhancement of the importance of the coda in the "Eroica" and elsewhere, the transformation of the *reprise* into something which, though it still marked a return to the music of the exposition after the free fantasia of the development section, was nevertheless far from being a mere repetition of it, and the passing of the scherzo without a break into the finale in the C minor, are cases in point. But none of his innovations was more significant than the omission of the recapitulation in the 2nd Leonora overture, because by making this sacrifice of traditional form on the altar of dramatic requirements Beethoven was anticipating or even laying the foundations of the symphonic poem. He clearly felt that after bringing the concrete events of the drama into high relief by sounding the trumpet call which heralded Florestan's deliverance, it would be inappropriate to recapitulate the themes associated with Leonora's courageous enterprise and her husband's grief in prison: the very brief allusion to the latter which he introduced was evidently intended only as a reminder—as though he were saying that past pain is sweet—and does not interfere with the flow of the narrative. Thus, from the standpoint of musical history, "Leonora No. 3", which was intended to replace, but which, we must be heartily thankful, has only supplemented its predecessor, might almost be said to mark a step backward—in the sense that traditional structure in this work reasserted its supremacy in Beethoven's mind over the symphonic poem as anticipated—or represented—by "Leonora No. 2". Beethoven came to feel that chronology was less important than symmetry and that it was not essential, in order to write a suitable orchestral prelude to his opera, to follow the order of events rigidly: and he may also, on second thoughts, have conceived that to recall the earlier phases of the story in the hour of triumph was psychologically true and apposite. Nevertheless the interesting result, for our present purposes, is that "Leonora No. 3" remains an overture in the eighteenth-century sense of the term, whereas "No. 2", though it followed the old structure of an overture up to a point, deserted it at the critical moment and so marked the advent of the symphonic poem.

Beethoven anticipated the symphonic poem in the Pastoral Symphony, also. It is true that though this is essentially programme music, it is, of course, a symphony and retains most of the structural features of that form of composition. Nevertheless, the interposition of an additional and independent movement, representing the storm, between the peasants' festival of the

scherzo and the shepherds' thanksgiving of the finale, marks an important departure from precedent. The construction of the storm movement itself follows no inherited plan, but is determined by the composer's fancy or experience of the subject which he is depicting: the first crescendo and the lull which succeeds it, followed by the further climax, the subsidence of the tempest, and the refreshing reappearance of the sun and blue sky clearly represented by the oboe and second violins and the upward scale on the flute; are all entirely inspired by nature, not founded on the laws of musical form. Moreover, the way in which these last three sections of the work succeed one another in the order which the subjects portrayed by them would follow in real life, and the fact that they do this without intervening pauses, are typical of Richard Strauss rather than of Beethoven. They result in making the composition almost intermediate between a symphony and a symphonic poem.

"Wellington's Victory" or "The Battle of Vitoria", written a few years later, is an even more direct anticipation of the symphonic poem on Beethoven's part, but it is not of great intrinsic value and its interest is mainly historical, as that of a piece of programme music which was not an overture to a play or to an opera and also not a symphony in the recognised sense of the term.

It was not to be expected that the symphonic poem should have come into existence before Beethoven's day. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries musicians were busy working out the new forms of the sonata, the quartet, the concerto, and the symphony, or in carrying on the development of opera as a form of musical drama by means of the reforms which Gluck instituted or in the direction of the musical portrayal of characters, which Mozart achieved among other things. Though others since Beethoven have produced many notable examples in the instrumental forms which I have just mentioned, they may be said to have reached their climax in him, and the time was ripe for fresh types of instrumental composition. It was natural that side by side with—or soon after—Schumann's cycles of romantic or descriptive short pieces for pianoforte and the emotionally passionate or delicate piano creations which Chopin gave to the world without framing them in sonata form, there should arise a form of orchestral composition which followed no previous rules of musical structure and took its cue from the incidents of a story, the interplay of characters, or the phenomena of the external world. Moreover this was an age of romance, in which legends and fairy-stories

were filling the imagination of artists not only in music but in other spheres, and for the portrayal of such subjects a free fancy untrammelled by the set forms of musical tradition, seemed to be demanded. Lastly, the nineteenth-century development of orchestral technique and colour facilitated the expression of these magical, supernatural, and fantastic elements, enriched the power to portray varieties of character and events and the sights and sounds of nature, and made it possible to convey and suggest delicate effects and atmosphere in innumerable, subtle ways.

Programme music, though its enhanced development dates from the nineteenth century, was a natural manifestation of the art from the beginning, and countless examples of it exist in the ages before Beethoven. But the symphonic poem as an art-form was literally a new product of that century, and apart from the striking anticipations of it which we have noticed among the works of that master, both the species and its name were invented by one man, Franz Liszt.

Berlioz and Liszt are often coupled together as writers of programme music, but whereas Liszt composed the "Dante" and "Faust" symphonies as well as symphonic poems, Berlioz composed no symphonic poems, but only programme symphonies, which, though not strictly adhering to the old symphonic forms, followed them to a considerable extent so far as the division into movements and the character of those movements themselves were concerned. For example, in the "Symphonie Fantastique" the slow introduction is followed by an allegro; the second movement, "A Ball", is written in waltz time, and as a dance movement corresponds to the minuets of Haydn and Mozart; the '*scène aux champs*' is the slow movement. The '*marche au supplice*' is structurally an interpolation, but the "Witches' Sabbath" is an 'allegro' finale, though extraordinary in quality. The recurrence of the theme of the '*idée fixe*' in various forms in the different movements anticipates both the treatment of the 'hero' theme in successive sections of Strauss's "Ein Heldenleben" and the use of the '*Leitmotiv*' in Wagner's operas, and the internal structure of each movement is freer than in Beethoven. Nevertheless, the work remains a symphony, not a symphonic poem. And the same is true of "Harold in Italy", which is likewise programme music and also has a theme, associated with Harold, recurring in the different movements. It is regrettable that Berlioz did not write symphonic poems: his genius would, one thinks, have been well fitted to the task.



Liszt produced no fewer than 13 compositions to which he gave the name of symphonic poem, all between the years 1850 and 1860. Most of these works are short as compared with any of those of Richard Strauss except "*Till Eulenspiegel*", nor are they minutely descriptive. They present the general ideas of the subjects indicated in the titles, rather than detailed narratives like those of Strauss. One of them, "*Prometheus*", is more in the nature of a cantata, containing, as it does, a succession of choruses set to words, so that it cannot be suggested that the voices form part of the instrumental fabric, as might be said of the wordless choral part of Delius's "*Song of the High Hills*".

With the exception of "*Les Préludes*" and "*Mazeppa*", the symphonic poems of Liszt are not often heard in the concert-room to-day, and it would almost seem as though he has to suffer the same fate as pioneers in other spheres. The original Florentine creators of opera at the beginning of the 17th century have had to pay the not unnatural penalty for being first in the field, in the form of being overshadowed by Monteverdi and the great musical dramatists of successive generations. A large debt is due to Glinka for being the founder of Russian opera—a type of composition so different from the operas of Italy, Germany, and France, as to constitute practically a fresh art-form altogether. But Glinka's chief importance was that he paved the way for Moussorgsky, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov. Haydn has been called the father of the symphony: but the real originators of it were predecessors of his, whose works are seldom performed to-day. Similarly, the symphonic poems of Liszt are valuable largely from the historical point of view. Apart from the striking anticipations of this genre to be found in Beethoven, they were the first works of their kind. As such, rather than because of their intrinsic merits, they are interesting to students of the art, many of whom would welcome more frequent opportunities of hearing them. Liszt's use of themes associated with particular characters or ideas, and his practice of transforming them to suit the needs of the literary subject rather than developing them on traditional symphonic lines, are of great importance in that they led to the more elaborate employment of these methods by later masters of the symphonic poem and by Wagner in his music dramas.

Once Liszt had set the example, the idea spread rapidly through various countries. Smetana in Bohemia, César Franck in Paris, Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov in Russia, are a few notable ones of the host of composers who contributed to the art

of the symphonic poem. Smetana wrote a cycle of six works of this kind, entitled "My Country", not so minutely detailed as the tone-poems of Richard Strauss, but nevertheless definitely narrative in character, as was natural in the case of a composer who was as far removed as any from the instinct to create absolute music. César Franck gave the name "Poème Symphonique" to works to which we should hesitate to apply it—such as "Rédemption" and "Psyché"—even as Liszt had done with his "Prometheus". If once we call a choral composition with words a symphonic poem, we shall find it impossible to draw a line between this art-form and a cantata or oratorio. Franck's real symphonic poems are "Les Eolides", "Le Chasseur Maudit", and "Les Djinns". The fact that the last-named is a work for pianoforte and orchestra and is to that extent akin to a concerto, does not disentitle it to the name "Symphonic poem" any more than Strauss's "Don Quixote" is in any way debarred from the description by the important parts for 'cello and viola solo. But powerful though the writing of "Le Chasseur Maudit" is, and vivid though the musical descriptions in "Les Djinns" are, it is not primarily as a composer of symphonic poems or of programme music at all that we think of Franck, but rather as one of the few masters of his age who successfully adapted the older instrumental forms to his personal requirements, as he did so triumphantly in the sonata for violin and pianoforte, the symphony in D minor, and the string quartet.

Tchaikovsky, on the other hand, was by temperament peculiarly well-fitted for the composition of symphonic poems. Even his works in other instrumental forms are very free in structure and frequently partake of the nature of programme music; but in "Romeo and Juliet", "Francesca da Rimini", and "Hamlet" he made three notable contributions to the art of the symphonic poem. These creations of Tchaikovsky are especially significant in that, while they contain many passages of wonderful description, (such as the scene of the "Inferno" in "Francesca da Rimini" and the tragic dénouement of "Romeo and Juliet"), they aim rather at character-drawing than at actual narrative. The musical portrait of Hamlet does not accord with our English notion of the prince as conveyed by Shakespeare, but it is none the less sure in its own Russian way. The loves of Romeo and Juliet, the feud of the Montagues and Capulets, the tragic picture of Francesca, are most convincingly painted, and throughout these works the rich orchestral colouring is a striking and appropriate feature.

It is, perhaps, apposite at this point to consider the debt which the symphonic poem owes to Wagner.

It might be thought that the mention of Tchaikovsky is the last thing which would be expected to raise the suggestion of Wagnerian influence, seeing that Tchaikovsky was hostile to the art of the great German master. That is true; but colour, characterisation, and descriptive power, which we have noticed as special qualities of the Russian composer's symphonic poems, are also, *par excellence*, features of the music of Wagner, though they had, of course, assumed very different forms in his operas from those which appear in Tchaikovsky. The sway of Wagner was, indeed, so tremendous that for many years few could resist it—even those who disliked his works finding it impossible to escape from their overmastering domination. The development of orchestral technique and colour, the vast range of instrumental subtleties, the power at one end of the scale and the extraordinary delicacy at the other, which characterise the Wagnerian scores, were of tremendous assistance to his later contemporaries and successors who were turning their attention to the furtherance of the art of composing symphonic poems. To state this is not in any way to belittle the enormous contribution of Berlioz to the exploitation of orchestral resources. Nevertheless, it is true that Wagner went even further in enlarging and enriching the orchestral palette and that the elaborate scores of Strauss and the subtle tints of Debussy (another anti-Wagnerian) would never have come into existence without him. The very nature of the symphonic poem demanded, for its successful development, a highly organised orchestral fabric; if its multifarious characters, events, scenes, and images were to be portrayed or suggested convincingly, the simple orchestra of Mozart or even the slightly more elaborate one of Beethoven's day was inadequate. Berlioz and Wagner between them made possible the orchestral technique which the art of the later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composers of symphonic poems required.

But Wagner's contribution to the needs of the symphonic poem was not only a technical one. The scope and strength of his imagination, utilising the rich orchestral colour scheme which it and his industry had fertilised, opened up immense possibilities of musical character-drawing and of descriptive power. So far as the latter quality is concerned, it may be doubted whether anything that his successors have produced has surpassed in vividness Wagner's own achievements—his storms and forests and fire and

water, his giants and dwarfs and winged horses, his music of the forge and the sea and the night. The point with which we are concerned here is that these varied and lifelike images in sound made possible the manifold representations of natural or fantastic scenes required by the creators of symphonic poems. They prepared the way for the death-chamber in "Tod und Verklärung", the strange adventures of "Don Quixote", the battle uproar in "Ein Heldenleben", the seascapes and sylvan glades and cloud-effects of Debussy, the exquisite nature studies of Delius, and the rolling waves in Arnold Bax's "Tintagel".

The portrayals of character in Wagner helped to stimulate musical characterisation generally. It may even be said that in hitting off the subtler points of human personalities Strauss has shown himself more adept than his great predecessor. Wagner was supreme at representing the big, profound, elemental qualities, but it was left to Strauss to devise brilliantly appropriate musical counterparts for the impish rascality of Till Eulenspiegel, the homely humanity of Sancho Panza, and the lovable, mad chivalry of Don Quixote. But it is essential to remember that without the immense enhancement of the power of music to describe character, which Wagner achieved, and the greatly enriched instrumental vocabulary which he employed, those ingenious refinements by the aid of which Strauss carried further the art of the symphonic poem would never have been possible.

The sensational character of Strauss's musical personality, with his elaborate orchestration, his audacious harmonies and dissonances, and the detailed complexity of the programmes which he interpreted in sound, so dominated the close of the nineteenth century that it is scarcely surprising that his work should have been regarded as marking the zenith of the symphonic poem as an art-form. His genius for character-drawing and power of description, the brilliance of his scores, the charm intermingled with the humour and oddity, the frequent deft touches of phraseology and instrumentation, and in general the unflagging interest sustained through compositions which in some cases occupy about forty minutes without a break, are sufficient to account for this. Moreover, the symphonic poems of Strauss were the first works in their genre which (with the exception of "Till Eulenspiegel") compared in length with the symphonies of a bygone age, so that their bulk as well as their qualities commanded attention.

Like Elgar's "Falstaff", they are very detailed pieces of narrative or description, as contrasted with those symphonie

poems which merely require a title or brief indication of the subject matter in order that their significance may be appreciated properly. This applies especially in the case of "Till Eulenspiegel", "Don Quixote", and "The Alpine Symphony". Yet, except in the case of the last-named work, it is noteworthy that the delineation and development of character are uppermost in the composer's mind. In "Macbeth", which was one of the earliest of the series, he was more concerned with characterisation than with the actual plot of the drama: there is no attempt to tell the story of Shakespeare's play, in the manner in which he afterwards portrayed the career of Don Juan, Till Eulenspiegel, the Hero, and Don Quixote, or narrated the ascent and descent of the mountain in successive stages. With the exception of a theme which may be taken to represent the witches, he is solely concerned with the contrasted characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Too much attention has been focussed on the momentarily sensational incidents, such as the "enemies" in "Ein Heldenleben", the "attack on the windmills" and the "flock of sheep" in "Don Quixote", and the baby's bath in the "Sinfonia Domestica," each of which occupies a very small part of the time taken by the whole work. Far more important is the way in which he treats in musical fashion the psychology of his characters at the different stages of their lives: the initial ardour, the diverse passions, and the recurring and increasing satiety of Don Juan; the attractive devilment of Till Eulenspiegel in the several episodes of his existence; the courageous determination of the central figure in "Ein Heldenleben"; and in "Don Quixote", the knight's mental derangement which persists through many adventures but is eventually shaken off before his death.

Yet it is, I suggest, a mistake to regard Strauss as the consummation of the symphonic poem. He marks the highest point hitherto reached by a certain type of work in that genre, but for all its scope and variety his art is subject to certain limitations. In saying this, I am not referring to his occasional lapses from taste or to the way in which, for instance, in "Ein Heldenleben" the autobiographical element obtrudes itself so that the composer seems at times to be identifying himself with the hero: the "enemies" consisting of hostile critics of his music, and "the hero's works of peace" taking the form of quotations from Strauss's own compositions. Rather am I thinking of particular intrinsic attributes, which limited his field. In the first place, there is in his musical mentality a superficiality or hollowness which some-

times detracts from his greatness. Although he is such an adept at characterisation he is apt to look at the surface of human nature. He is a brilliant, but not a profound writer. He is incapable of portraying the elemental passions and the great forces of nature in the way that Wagner did, or of sounding the depths in the manner of Beethoven. His *Don Juan* is buoyant and vigorous, but not markedly sexual. The closing section of "Tod und Verklärung" is a gorgeous piece of orchestral pageantry, rather than a picture of divine transfiguration. Even the wonders and fascination of "Also sprach Zarathustra" somehow fall short of its tremendous theme. The hero in "Ein Heldenleben", for all its strength, lacks the depth of character evinced in Beethoven's "Eroica" or the fundamental power of Wagner's "Siegfried". The "Sinfonia Domestica" and the "Alpine Symphony" (which are really symphonic poems in spite of their names) mark a falling-off from their predecessors. The "Domestica", apart from its love-music, is emotionally and intellectually empty; we might, perhaps, say that the baby is only a doll dressed in rich and luxurious clothing. The "Alpine Symphony" is an agreeable excursion, but its thematic material is distinctly weak and its merits are almost entirely affairs of orchestration: there is little sign that the composer's imagination had been set aflame by the beauties of the mountains. It is a far cry from this to the earnest love of great solitudes that we get in Sibelius or the exquisite nature poems of Delius. "Till" and "Don Quixote" are, I think, the only symphonic poems in which Strauss's music completely realises the subject matter: in "Till" great profundity is not called for, but rather the instinct to portray mischief and roguery; "Don Quixote" is the finest of his tone-poems, just because, in addition to its vivid pieces of description, it is here, and here alone, that he has fully interpreted a character in the round, with its crazy knight-errantry, its humour, and its kindliness.

Secondly, though Strauss called his works "tone-poems", he does not really possess a poetic mind. This is, of course, no flaw in him—we might as well criticise a novelist for not being a poet—but it does suggest that, though Strauss has covered a great deal of ground, he has left a wide field untouched. He is not an artist of dreams and visions and evanescent atmosphere, nor a teller of legendary tales, nor is he—in spite of "Ein Heldenleben"—a true poet of heroic deeds, but a bold and vigorous narrator, who gains his points by definite strokes and vivid, sonorous passages. His language is the language of prose—a



forceful, supple prose—and his so-called “tone-poems” are not poems at all, but rather brilliant short stories, insofar as it is possible to draw an analogy between music and literature. As such, they have not been surpassed hitherto, but it is misleading to attribute the consummation of the symphonic poem to a composer whose works present few of the characteristics of poetry.

It would seem, therefore, that Strauss’s achievements, because of their frequent superficiality on the one hand, and their essentially prosaic nature on the other, left the way open for a symphonic poetry which should deal with profound elemental issues, or should be truly poetic in character. These two roads are, of course, by no means entirely separate, but the rough distinction between them is familiar enough. The greatest poetry is profound, but depth is present not only in poetry but elsewhere, and it is possible for a writer to strike deep into human nature or into the elemental truths of existence, without being a poet. Plato and Dickens were great artists, as well as Shakespeare.

There is much to be said for the view that music does not lend itself to the presentation of philosophy. It can, however, give utterance to such profound, or even metaphysical, thoughts as are revealed in the works of Beethoven’s last period, and it might seem that the art-form known as the symphonic poem, by utilising the many voices of the orchestra without adhering to a prescribed musical structure, would be capable of sounding the depths of human nature and searching the hidden secrets of things. It is some such task as this that Scriabin attempted in his three works “The Divine-Poem”, “Prometheus”, and “Le poème de l’extase”. The first of these is on the border-line between a symphonic poem and a symphony. It resembles a symphony in that it is framed in distinct movements (three in number), and that the first of these is approximately in sonata form: but the linking together of the three sections into one continuous composition, and the fact that the traditional structure is moulded to suit the programme which the work illustrates, bring it near to being a symphonic poem. It marks the parting of the ways in Scriabin’s career, and is, I think, the only one of these three works in which the composer embodies his ideas in music in a wholly satisfactory way. The struggle between the sensual “voluptés” and the “jeu divin” of true freedom of the spirit is set forth in a composition of great strength and beauty, untarnished by the excesses which mar the later works. Both in “Prometheus” and the “Poème de l’extase” we feel that the music, for all its technical power and vivid

imagination, fails to rise to the heights of the tremendous subjects which he set himself. "Prometheus", or the "poem of fire", afforded a superb opportunity for a masterpiece, but Scriabin had not the genius to accomplish it. It is almost as though he was so bent on showing himself to be a revolutionary (and also on developing his scheme for a 'keyboard of light') that he missed the greater issue. It is true that in the "Poème de l'extase" we do get ecstasy indeed, but we also find hysteria, verging even on insanity, in those repeated, almost intolerable, climaxes of unrestrained sound and fervour.

Thus the road which might lead the symphonic poem in the direction in which the subject matter at least, though possibly not the music itself, of "Also sprach Zarathustra" seemed to point, has remained to a large extent unexplored hitherto—Scriabin having on the whole failed to make great headway along it. But the path of poetic imagination, which perhaps affords a more natural outlet for the symphonic poem as an art-form, has attracted several composers. We shall find no surer guide to it than Frederic Delius.

None of Delius's works is entitled a symphonic poem, but this fact need not surprise us when we recall that the world is now rich in compositions which are in truth symphonic poems, though not so described. The fantasia overtures of Tchaikovsky, a "prelude" such as Debussy's "L'Après-midi d'un faune", a "symphonic movement" like Honegger's "Rugby", a "scherzo" as Dukas called his "Apprenti sorcier", a "symphonic rhapsody" such as Ireland's "Mai Dun", or even a piece bearing only the title of "Pacific 231", are just as certainly symphonic poems as are those works for which Liszt originally invented the phrase. It is possible to take the view that "tone-poem" (which is Strauss's expression) is a better name, on the ground that this class of work breaks away from the tradition of the symphony and that it is therefore unsuitable to call it a "symphonic poem." On the other hand, the description is apposite from the point of view that it correctly associates the genre with the orchestra, and a symphony is but an orchestral sonata; whereas "tone-poem" might be said to be too wide a term, seeing that it would be just as appropriate to a song or an opera, for instance, as to the kind of work which we are considering. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that some of Delius's compositions are as essentially poems of orchestral sound as any musical creations in the world could be. If Strauss is a master of musical prose, Delius is *par excellence* a musical poet.

He has something of the mentality of Wordsworth—a profound and instinctive sense of the beauty of nature, illumined by a poet's insight into the significance that lies behind and beyond that beauty.

To think of Delius is to remember those exquisite nature poems for small orchestra, "A song before sunrise", "Summer night on the River", and "On hearing the first cuckoo in spring"; or the unutterably lovely fantasy, "In a summer garden". It was at one time suggested that in these and other works, for all their beauty, there was a lack of form; but closer acquaintance with them reveals that though they follow no traditional structure, Delius has created the appropriate form in each case. It is the old tale. The notion that Wagner's music-dramas were formless because they were outwardly unlike any operas that had preceded them, has long since been exploded, and it is now generally recognised that he was one of the greatest musical architects in history. Similarly, there are a unity and a shape in each one of these masterpieces of Delius, which are lacking in many more formal works of an earlier age. He will take a few themes or even mere phrases, and by countless subtle transformations of harmony and colour they twine in and out of one another in a fashion inevitably right and genuine and yet so indefinable, that the original notion of Delius being deficient in a sense of form was not, perhaps, unnatural in the early days, mistaken though we can now see it to be. Sometimes, indeed, he utilises, though in a very free manner, the traditional method of a theme and variations, even as Strauss did in "Don Quixote". But in Strauss we become so absorbed in the knight's strange adventures that we almost forget that we are listening to a work in 'variation' form, just as we are apt to overlook the fact that "Till Eulenspiegel" partakes roughly of the character of a 'rondo'. With Delius's "Brigg Fair" and "Appalachia", on the other hand, we never lose sight of the truth that they are sets of variations, and the poetry seems largely to consist in the manner in which the theme assumes these different and beautiful shapes. "Appalachia" is partly a choral work, and is something between a symphonic poem and a cantata. No words are sung until the thirteenth variation is reached, and only there and in the final, fifteenth, variation; elsewhere, the voices, where used, utter wordless music with mysterious or tranquil effect: the orchestra predominates throughout. In the magnificent "Song of the High Hills", the chorus is as important as the orchestra, being utilised to represent humanity as contrasted with nature,

but is given no words to sing at all, and for this reason the work can legitimately be described as a symphonic poem without qualification, the voices being employed as though they were instruments; by this I do not mean to imply that the vocal writing is itself instrumental in character, but merely that the employment of voices, without words, simply to produce musical sounds, either as part of the orchestral fabric or as forming an antithesis to the orchestra, involves their being treated as instruments.

"Eventyr" is in a class by itself among Delius's works, because it represents his one excursion into the sphere of the grotesque. The graphic representation of the goblins and fantastic creatures of the supernatural world, which break in upon the tranquil existence of the peasants, comes as a surprise to those who make the mistake of regarding Delius as a composer lacking in variety. No greater contrast to the dreamy mood of some of his nature-pieces could well be imagined. The "North Country Sketches" are four in number, three of them (Nos. 1, 2, and 4)—"Autumn", "Winter Landscape", and "The March of Spring"—being exquisite poems of the seasons; but in the remaining one the composer refrains from portraying summer and calls the movement a "Dance", though it is a dance of a curious kind which gradually rises to a climax of frenzy and then dies away. The movement seems to stand apart from the others, and yet its dance-character links the work as a whole (which has been described as a suite by virtue of its being a cycle of short pieces) to the old suites of dances.

The modern suite can hardly be sundered entirely from the symphonic poem, for it often consists of a group of short orchestral poems which, though each is a distinct piece, possess some underlying unity. Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade", for instance, is a suite of four poems representing four of the tales which Scheherazade told to the Sultan Shahriar, and there is a recurring motive which typifies her taking up her narrative again between each story. They are not really intended for dancing purposes, and the ballet which Diaghileff associated with the music deals with a different subject. "The Planets" of Holst is another example of a so-called "suite" which is really a cycle of small symphonic poems. The central idea which binds them together is that they express the astrological significance of various planets: Mars, the bringer of war; Venus, of peace; Jupiter, of jollity; Saturn, of old age; and so on. And though each is sufficiently a separate piece to make it possible to perform it, or two or three of them, apart from the rest, something is inevitably lost when they are not all played in the

proper sequence, both because the work as a whole possesses a unity and because the order of the movements has been so arranged as to provide particular contrasts between them.

Debussy did not give the name "Suite" either to his "three nocturnes" for orchestra or to "La mer", which latter work he entitled "symphonic sketches". These compositions, however, are also cycles of tone-poems. The nocturnes are a group, possessing a single character in that they are the air-borne fancies of a musical poet—images in sound of slowly moving clouds, of a heavenly procession, and of the voices of sirens floating over the gently rocking waves. The bond between the three pieces which comprise "La mer" is obvious: they represent different aspects of the sea. The work might almost be described as a miniature sea-symphony, except that the internal structure of each piece depends upon purely poetic considerations and not upon any symphonic tradition. "Ibéria" is another group of orchestral images bound together by a common idea—in this case the character of the Spanish scene, so that they form a Frenchman's counterpart to de Falla's "Nights in a Garden of Spain" which is also a cycle of three little poems setting forth a Spaniard's conception of three landscapes in his own country.

Sibelius is one of the few great composers of symphonies who have also created a series of symphonic poems. In their own way his works are just as poetic as those of Delius and Debussy—as opposed to the sonorous prose narratives of Richard Strauss—but they are utterly different in character. There is nothing superficial about Debussy—he is too genuine a poet for that; but he lacks the profundity of Delius; his art is imaginative, bewitching and delicate; it is objective in character. Delius combines both depth and outward charm: the surface beauty of his music penetrates down to its core—like the all too rare cases of women whose inward natures are as lovely as their faces. Sibelius is at the other end of the scale: not that his music is ugly—far from it; but in its uncompromising strength, and even occasional austerity, it seems to disdain the outward graces and to seek only the profound underlying truths of legend or nature, striving to illumine these by musical poetry. In "Finlandia", an early work, it is true that he is voicing the spirit of his countrymen and his art therefore wears here a simpler, even popular, garb. Sometimes too, as in "The Swan of Tuonela", he writes with a quiet, elusive charm that is hardly characteristic of the bulk of his work. But in "En Saga" and "Tapiola", which are more typical of him, he has

a different tale to tell. "En Saga", for which the composer has issued no precise programme, is imbued with a rugged, romantic grandeur; "Tapiola" is a superb, but sombre, picture of vast Northern forests, within which the Forest god lives and mysterious beings fashion weird spells.

From the æsthetic standpoint, Arnold Bax—another creator of symphonic poems as well as of symphonies—occupies an interesting position in the world of the symphonic poem. His "November Woods" is on the same lines as Delius's poems of nature—a poetic reflection on a natural scene—even though its idiom is different. On the other hand, "The Garden of Fand", though it contains descriptions of the sea, is largely a fairy story. "In the færy hills" depicts the revels of the little people and the fate of Oisín, the harper, while the Irish hills are only a background. "Tintagel" is not merely a picture of the waves rolling and dashing themselves against the Cornish headland, but is also partly a reflection of the legend associated with the place, though here nature predominates over mythology. Thus Bax, being a nature poet, shows an affinity to Delius on the one hand, and on the other to Sibelius with his poems of myths and fairy stories in a natural setting. But his art, so far as the symphonic poems are concerned, is lighter in texture, less forbidding than that of Sibelius: he reveals the romantic imagination of his Celtic blood, whereas the other is a Finn imbued with all the rugged strength of his race.

On the whole, the tendency of symphonic poems during this century has been away from the detailed narratives of Strauss and towards the more generalised, or suggestive, poetic elegies, for which a mere title, a few verses, or a brief indication of the subject described, are sufficient to set up in us the right train of thought to enable us to follow the composer's intentions. Perhaps the most notable exception to this has been Elgar's Symphonic study, "Falstaff," which, though so different intrinsically from the art of Strauss, follows the Straussian model not merely in representing the principal characters of the story psychologically but in depicting the successive events in close detail. The whole career of the fat knight as described by Shakespeare in "Henry IV" and "Henry V", is here set forth in musical tones, so that the work is one of the most complete contributions to Shakespearean portraiture in existence.

The only important respect in which it might be said that Strauss's narratives have had successors is to be found by regarding the music of certain ballets as symphonic poems. If the com-



plete music of the ballets of Stravinsky and de Falla or of Ravel's "Daphnis and Chloe" be performed in a concert-room, with notes in the programme describing the action which would be taking place on the stage, the result, it may be suggested, is in effect a symphonic poem of the narrative type. In our mind's eye, we can follow the tale of the Firebird or watch the antics and the careers of Petrouchka and the other figures of the story. It is true that by this process we are not apprehending even the music itself exactly in the way in which the composer intended that we should, seeing that he meant it to accompany some of the most brilliant stage-pictures, choreography, dancing, and miming that have ever been presented in a theatre. Nevertheless, the music of Stravinsky in his finest ballets, of de Falla in "The Three-Cornered Hat" and "El Amor Brujo", of Ravel in "Daphnis and Chloe", if we are given clear verbal descriptions of all that is supposed to be passing on the stage, can hardly be said to fail to create its proper effect in a concert-hall. This would seem to be one more illustration of a class of work which is on the border-line of the world of the symphonic poem, seeing that it is purely orchestral music, the shape and contours of which are dictated by a story external to music itself and not by any traditional musical structure: its association with a theatrical *mise-en-scène* is the only feature—admittedly an important one—which prevents it from being recognised as belonging completely to the sphere of the symphonic poem.

The number of symphonic poems composed during the comparatively short period for which this form of composition has been in existence is enormous, but there is no reason to imagine that its career is approaching a close or that we have yet seen an end of the varieties of which it is capable. It might be thought that in an age which has witnessed an attempt to return to abstract music there would be an aversion from an art-form which is essentially a species of programme music; but experience has proved the contrary. The number of modern composers of naked sound sensations is small in comparison with those who still delight to convey emotions in tone or to portray the scenes and events and characters of the external world. The scope of the symphonic poem is almost infinite, and the more that music develops its orchestral technique, its varied power and subtlety of effect, the more paths are likely to be opened up, along which the symphonic poem can progress. The art of portraying personages and describing their careers, is almost in its infancy—in the sense that that which has been already

accomplished by Strauss and Elgar might be followed by others in the case of countless striking characters both of fiction and of history. The pictorial and poetical sides of music are practically unlimited, and though for many of the profounder issues the symphonic poem may not be a more suitable medium than the symphony, there is no reason why the two art-forms should not continue to flourish side by side. It is even permissible to imagine that, whereas the symphony has already found its Beethoven, the greatest genius of the symphonic poem is still to come.

## LUDWIG THUILLE

(November 30, 1861—February 5, 1907)

By EDGAR ISTELE

**T**HOSE whom the gods love die young."

If there is any truth in the old proverb, then Ludwig Thuille was a darling of the gods. He left us in the vigorous freshness of youth, and a kindly fate spared him all the bitterness that the World War and the post-war period brought to his friends and associates. Yet we have reason to regret his early departure, for here too, Death buried not only a rich possession, but almost brighter hopes. Thuille, the creator—Thuille, the teacher—no hour had more need of him than the present.

What used to be spoken of, about the end of the last century, as the "Münchner Schule" embraced three well-defined musical personalities, closely bound together by ties of friendship, despite the dissimilarity of their styles: Ludwig Thuille, Richard Strauss, and Max Schillings. Thuille, the oldest of the three, was an individual figure, sharply differentiated from his comrades; if he lacked the external brilliancy, the immediate fascination of Strauss, and Schilling's stark pathos, he was given in their stead a warm, cordial tenderness and, further, the irresistible roguishness that, born of deep emotional experience, finds artistic expression in grace and charm. His personality, then, was a happy blend of Teutonic moodiness and Latin geniality. And naturally enough, for his family traces its origin to Savoy, where, south of Mount Blanc, from the slopes of little St. Bernard, there flows a tiny river—"La Thuille". For several generations the family had been settled in Tyrol, and it was here that Thuille was born—in Bozen, now Italian territory, the birthplace of Walter von der Vogelweide, the illustrious German Minnesinger commemorated in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Meistersinger*, the spiritual ancestor with whom Thuille, who always thought of himself as a German Tyrolese for all his French descent, had many traits of character in common.

His musical talent was soon evident—at the age of eight he had already begun to compose. In the words of one who, as a girl, was a playmate of his: "He was a quiet, introspective lad, often lost in his own dreaming. At the same time he was a good sport and enjoyed taking part in any kind of mischief."<sup>1</sup> Here already

<sup>1</sup>Communicated in Friedrich Munter's charming biography (Munich, 1923), to which I am indebted for other valuable details.

we have the two traits of character that especially distinguished him—the whole of the later Thuille, the romanticist, the engaging rascal. After having lost both parents as a boy—his father, a music dealer—his mother, whose beautiful voice he inherited—he passed some time as a chorister in Kremsmünster (Upper Austria), like Haydn and Schubert, and received some instruction in violin- and piano-playing. Then a fortunate accident brought him the woman whom he came to regard as his second mother, the rather well-to-do widow of the Tyrolese composer Nagiller, who gave her talented, but quite poverty-stricken *protégé* the means to continue his humanistic and musical studies in Innsbruck. To the good offices of this high-minded woman Thuille owed also his early acquaintance with Richard Strauss. The young enthusiasts soon became fast friends, and their youthful friendship, continued into mature manhood, culminated in Strauss's dedication of his *Don Juan* to Thuille. "Dearest, best, fairest, most magnificent Ludwig!" Strauss writes in boyish exuberance to his friend, three years his senior, signing himself: "Your most affectionate and ever-faithful friend Richard." Strauss sent his older correspondent regular reports on his first essays in composition and gratefully accepted the corrections offered him; Thuille in his turn sent and sometimes dedicated compositions to Strauss, who studied them with real interest. For by this time Thuille had at last found a suitable teacher in Josef Pembaur, senior—father of the Josef Pembaur, junior, who later became Thuille's best-known piano-pupil—and was studying composition as well as piano and organ. And in 1879 this excellent musician, a pupil of Rheinberger and of Bruckner, sent young Thuille on to the Royal Music-School (later Academy of Music) in Munich.

Munich, which was to become Thuille's second home, had remained quite conservative in its musical preferences, though under Hermann Levi's direction the Court Opera was already dominated by Wagner's music. Thuille too was by birth and training more inclined to the classical and older romantic style than to the Wagnerian and even at this time professed to be "far removed from Wagnerism" and its "charlatanries." To be sure, he calls *Lohengrin* "one of the fairest flowers in the garden of German opera," but in *Tannhäuser* the "sultry, oppressive atmosphere" repels him, leading him, strangely enough, to regard this work as far inferior to *Lohengrin*. *Tristan und Isolde* made a powerful impression, leaving him rather more stunned than uplifted, yet he rejected the Wagnerian "method" as "fundamentally false," and held that only Wagner's way of applying it partially justified

its use. His views on *Meistersinger* and *Götterdämmerung* are to much the same effect. These judgments, however immature they may be in some respects, are none the less noteworthy from this standpoint: Thuille, who later became an enthusiastic Wagner devotee, here rejects Wagner's influence instinctively as a (to him) harmful one. With all his respect for Wagner, Thuille saw in him a danger, as a most extraordinary remark he made to me reveals. I had brought him the score of my first comic opera, *Der fahrende Schüler*, at the close of my years of study with him. He looked over the work without expressing any opinion, making only such technical improvements as he thought necessary. Finally, however, he remarked suddenly: "To me the astonishing thing is that you have kept yourself entirely free from the Wagnerian influence!"

Although he was thoroughly familiar with operatic problems and achieved his greatest success in this field, Thuille was not a born opera-composer like Gluck, Mozart, Weber, Wagner, Meyerbeer, Verdi, and Bizet, and the concert-life of Munich consequently attracted him more than the local operatic stage. For the first time he heard Beethoven's symphonies, excellently performed under Levi; and von Bülow's interpretation of the last five piano sonatas afforded him "the highest, purest, and most unmixed artistic satisfaction." Mozart's music already enchanted him; Haydn, on the other hand, struck him, curiously enough, as "in large part antiquated and pedantic (*zopfig*)." His real idol—here he is on common ground with Bizet—was "the unique, the splendid" Robert Schumann. To one of his enthusiastic letters Strauss replies: "Misguided Schumann-worshipper! comparing a Schumann adagio with a Beethoven adagio! You are really impossible! What can you be thinking of?" It was characteristic of Strauss, who at this time was still very much under the anti-Wagnerian influence of his father, to be unable to say a good word for the Master of Bayreuth, just as it was characteristic of Thuille, on receiving from his friend a composition in quite another style, to remark prophetically: "I believe Richard will one day become a Wagnerian after all."

In Munich the ultra-conservative Josef Rheinberger subjected the romantic Thuille to strict discipline; and though the latter often complained about the pedantry of his teacher, nicknamed the "Fugen-Seppl", he gratefully acknowledged that Rheinberger had given him the solid technical foundation for his later development. No contrapuntal problem was too involved for him, and in this respect he had greater facility than his friend Strauss, who once sent Thuille an original fugue-subject (from *Heldenleben*, I think)

to answer, having despaired of finding the answer for himself. And Thuille found the answer—he showed it to me.

Through Strauss, who shared with him his love, not only of music, but also of the game of "Skat", Thuille made two further acquaintances: Alexander Ritter, who turned young Strauss from classicism to the new romanticism, and Emma Dietl, the Bavarian General's daughter who, in 1887, was to become Thuille's wife. As was the case with Schumann, the years of Thuille's betrothal and early marriage were years of intensive creative activity, and it was at this time that he wrote the first work to make his name widely known—the Sextet Op. 6 for piano and wind instruments, dedicated to his bride. Composed between 1885 and 1887, and first performed with extraordinary success at the Wiesbaden Festival in 1889, this attractive work soon found a place on concert programs everywhere. Facile in invention, remarkably clear in form, it affords the wind instruments a grateful opportunity without allowing the piano to overplay its role as accompanying instrument.

Much more significant is the later Piano Quintet Op. 20 in E-flat major (1898-1901). Here one recognizes the mature craftsmanship of a composer who has attained the culmination of his creative powers and speaks his own individual language. An undercurrent of deep emotion pervades the entire work, the appreciation of whose beauties requires affectionate study. Its melodic line is uniform throughout, its texture predominantly polyphonic. The piano part, more elaborate than in the Sextet, never oversteps the bounds of chamber music, though there are occasional bits of orchestral coloring. Thuille has also two excellent sonatas to his credit—one for cello and piano, another for violin and piano—works which have much in common as regards formal construction and emotional content, despite a difference of several years in the dates of their composition.

Even before composing the Sextet, his first real success, Thuille had tried his hand at writing for orchestra, but his work in this field goes no further than such tentative and unpublished youthful essays as the F major Symphony and the "Springtime" Overture. Yet one could learn a great deal from Thuille about this very branch of composition, for his understanding of the orchestra was so thorough and his sense for natural colors so fine, that, as he confessed one day, he had never bothered to "study" instrumentation, but hit at once on proper methods. That he produced nothing worthy of note in the field of "absolute" music or in that of "program" music, but turned his orchestral mastery



into purely operatic channels, helps to define his artistic make-up. Most of his pupils went in for symphonic poems and prologues—for program music, in short. I was one of the few exceptions. Thuille himself remarked very justly: "Those who write symphonic poems to-day do so only from the artistic urge to imitate; Strauss alone chooses the form from inner necessity."

Thuille was by nature a romanticist. In his case, old romantic accents modify the new inflection that made itself heard in the musical language of his day. For this reason Thuille's "modernity" is never extreme. Prudent moderation marks his every work: moderation in the use of the radiant, glowing palette of the modern orchestra whose unlimited resources he explores, without neglecting outline for color or giving way to brutal noise-making; moderation on the harmonic side, where he comes forward as an outspoken chromaticist without losing sight of the unifying tonal principle amid his bold modulations or degrading his rich polyphony to cacophony. Moderation, again, is the source of his fine sense for formal construction, which never descends to formalism, but gives even the traditional forms a strangely new and individual aspect. And, to conclude, he believes that a theme should have a physiognomy and subscribes to the opinion that the singing voice ought really to sing, an opinion, to be sure, that some were already decrying as old-fashioned in his day.

As a song-writer Thuille did important work, especially after his wife had found a congenial poet for him in Karl Stieler. For a time he shared the preference of his circle for contemporary poetry (Bierbaum, for instance); later he turned to the romanticists with whom he was naturally more in sympathy. "Des Knaben Wunderhorn", Eichendorff, and Brentano became his favorites. There are priceless gems among Thuille's lyrics; if they are almost forgotten to-day it is because the songs of Hugo Wolf, which so quickly became the fashion, and the superficially brilliant Strauss songs afforded them a competition to which the short-lived Thuille, with his dislike of advertising, could only oppose his fine poetic insight. As Richard Strauss once observed, only great masterpieces and trash succeed of themselves; all other art-products must be championed. Did anyone champion Thuille's songs, worthy of a place of honor between Cornelius and Jensen?

More widely known than Thuille's songs are his numerous choruses for men's voices, written during the years of his association as conductor with the Munich singing-society "Liederhort". Until Thuille's appearance this department of composition had been a stamping-ground for dilettantes of the lowest order, and

even his first attempts belong to the type of men's chorus that may be said to go to the "tipsy Liedertafel-tune" (*bierselige Liedertafelweis*). But Thuille's singers are no longer society members in their club-rooms—they have become hearty comrades, joining out-of-doors in a merry song. The pungent breath of the forest animates a number of these choruses, especially the beautiful settings of poems by Eichendorff (Op. 11 and 21). Thuille, child of the mountains and born hunter, may well have planned some of them as he stalked his game. Among his less numerous choruses for women's voices, those to poems by Eichendorff (Op. 31) are again the most attractive. Here the insinuating magic of the three women's voices reproduces the lines in the most delicate shades imaginable. Thuille's connection with the "Liederhort", for one of whose carnival entertainments he had written the clever burlesque *Fridolin* for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra, gave him the idea of devoting himself to dramatic music, which from thenceforward became his principal interest.

Alexander Ritter, whom Thuille had met through Strauss in Meiningen, settled in Munich in 1886 and did not rest until he had converted his younger friends, Strauss and Thuille, to the gospel of Liszt and Wagner. A series of pilgrimages to Bayreuth sealed the new brotherhood, which at the same time represents the climax of the old friendship. At this time, too, Thuille arranged Strauss's *Macbeth* and *Don Juan* for piano four hands. It was Ritter, again, who provided Thuille with the text of *Teuerdank*, his first work for the stage. As Weber says, first operas and first puppies ought always to be drowned; his remark may certainly be applied to this early opera of Thuille's. Indeed, the composer himself realized this later, for he published only the delightful overture (his "Romantic" Overture). From both the literary and the dramatic standpoints, the text miscarries completely; the music throughout is under the influence of the *Meistersinger*. The work won a prize and was cordially received on its first performance in Munich under Strauss, March 12, 1897.

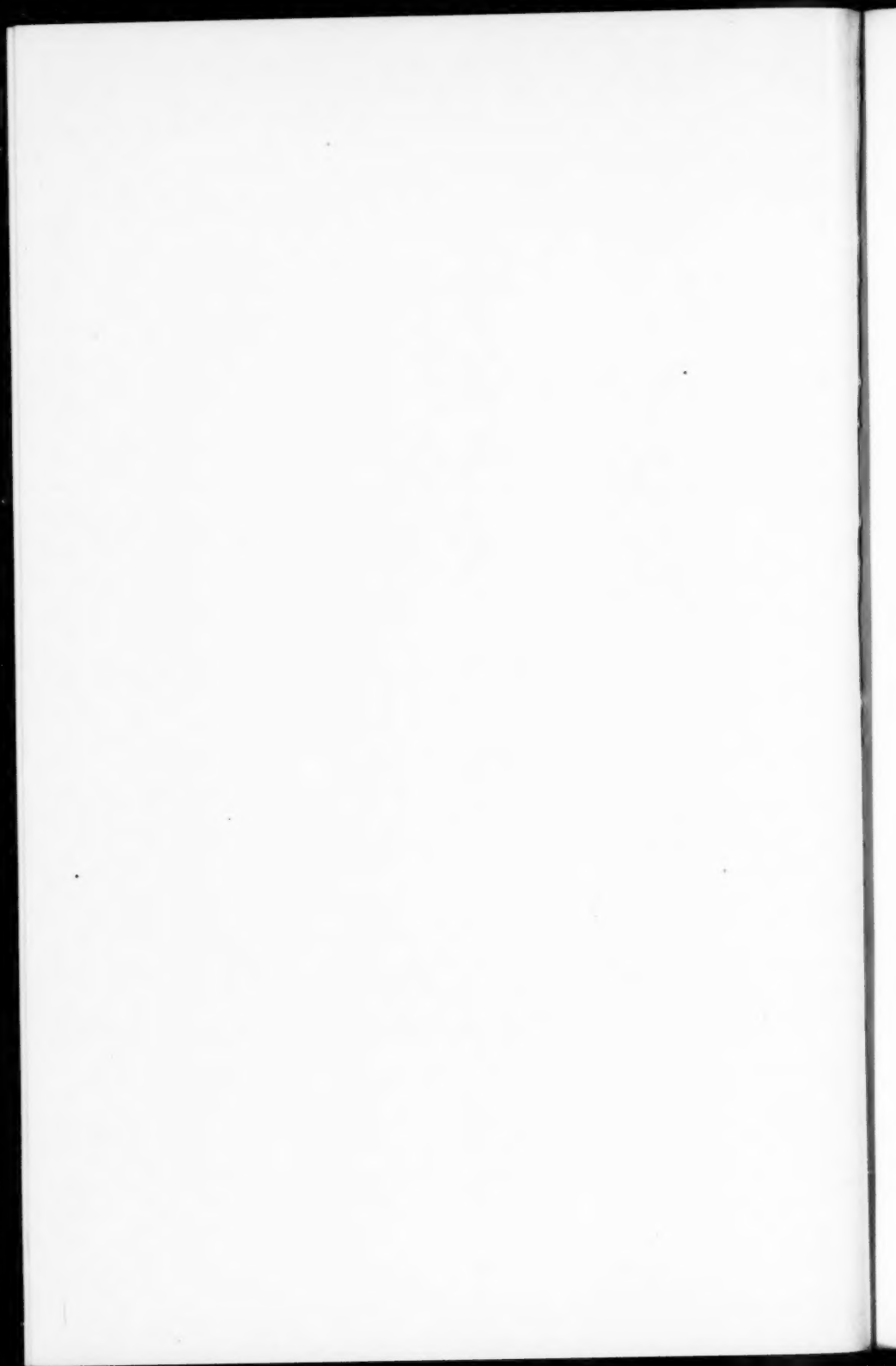
By comparison, Thuille's music for Otto Julius Bierbaum's *Lobetanz* was an unqualified success. In point of originality, the work stands head and shoulders above that other treatment of the same subject—Weinberger's *Schwanda*—of late the most successful German opera. Soon after Mottl introduced it in Munich on February 6, 1898, *Lobetanz* was performed in Berlin under Muck; later the work was taken up by all the opera houses. New York heard it in 1911, after the composer's death, with recitatives



Museum Bonn  
 Carl Engel für seine Freundschaft  
 Ludwig Thuille

Ludwig Thuille

(From an oil painting by P. Schroeter, 1899.)



arranged by his pupil and son-in-law, Walter Courvoisier, replacing the spoken dialogue of the original.

Merry and light-hearted fairyland, in which the simple tale of princess and fiddler unfolds itself, was just the thing for sparkling music; and, despite the refinement of his technique, Thuille here creates a truly naïve work, irresistible in its sunny attractiveness. To this basic mood, the grandiose dungeon-scene in Act III, with its grotesque, highly original atmosphere of horror, is sharply contrasted. One thinks instinctively of E. T. A. Hoffmann or of "Hell"-Breughel. If the remainder of the work suggests the Wagner of *Rheingold* or Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, in the dungeon scene Thuille is thoroughly himself.

Thuille throws off Wagner's influence altogether in his next composition for the stage, the five-act *Gugeline*, first performed in Bremen, March 4, 1901. The libretto, again by Bierbaum, is unfortunately a complete failure. As regards subject-matter alone, it is much too similar to *Lobetanz*. The two works have the same fairy-tale background, the same conventional characters: in the one case, prince and peasant maid; in the other, princess and fiddler. Act III, the high point of the score, is exceedingly effective, even when performed in concert, as Strauss has done in Berlin. Entirely given over to the two principals, it is, to be sure, rather more lyric than dramatic in its restrained delicacy, yet these scenes also make a powerful impression in the opera house, thanks to their magical coloring, to their grateful alternation of playful, childlike innocence and bold, unbridled passion. There follows, by way of contrast, the crude realism of the country fair in Act IV. The scene suggests that, for all his poetic insight, Thuille may perhaps have been better equipped for comic-opera composition. Had he found a congenial collaborator for a work in this field, his lovely *Gugeline* music might have been saved and his later operatic projects realized. Thuille himself saw the shortcomings of his next libretto, Elsa von Wolzogen's *Der Heiligenschein*, and abandoned work on it after the first act. The fragment has been orchestrated by Courvoisier and performed by Mottl, but the result was far from gratifying.

It is to be regretted that Thuille's work for the stage remains a torso. He was a victim of his untheatrical librettos. *Lobetanz* is the happy exception, though even in this case the text has proved too weak dramatically for the work to maintain its place in the repertory.

So, in the course of a decade or two, the veil of oblivion has already enshrouded most of Thuille's works. His strong, lovable,

sunny personality survives, however, in the great influence he exerted on his numerous pupils. For twenty years a teacher at the Academy of Music in Munich, he taught there some two hundred students. Yet this connection with a bureaucratic institute governed by the authorities was always uncongenial to him—in fun, he referred to the Academy as “The Monkey House” (*Affenkasten*). The pupils nearest to his heart were his private pupils, and during his last years so many flocked to him from all over the world that careful selection of the new applicants was imperative. The so-called “Jung-Münchner Schule” (known to the elect as “The Thuilleries”) consisted almost exclusively of Thuille’s private pupils, among whom, without claiming to present a complete register, I may name Abendroth, Atherton, Bischoff, Boehe, Braunfels, Cortolezis, Courvoisier, Mabel Daniels,<sup>2</sup> Drach, Engel, Istel, Klenau, Mikorey, Neff, Joseph Pembaur, Jr., vom Rath, Reichenberger, Reuss, Schilling-Ziemssen, H. K. Schmid, Siegel, von Waltershausen, and Weismann.

Thuille’s “method” was the simplest imaginable. Once one had completed the usual conservatory exercises in counterpoint—these were pursued with a thoroughness free from pedantry and based in the main on the practical study of Bach—one composed according to one’s own lights and in whatever form one chose. Instead of rules and prohibitions Thuille offered meticulous criticism, criticism that consisted solely of technical advice and correction concerning the composition at hand, so that each pupil was sure to receive what he needed. That one could neither teach nor learn “composing”, but should confine one-self to technical matters, was the fundamental maxim of Thuille’s teaching practice, some part of which is set down in the *Harmonielehre* he wrote with Rudolf Louis. Accordingly, almost everyone of his pupils has gone his own way, from extreme modernity to near conservatism. A solid musical foundation is common to them all, however, and, toward him to whom they owe that foundation, a sense of immeasurable gratitude that has already outlived its object by several decades. As Luther Burbank said so beautifully at the close of his splendid volume *The Harvest of the Years*: “I believe in the immortality of influence. Your influence is your birthright and your epitaph. It can make you ephemeral, inconsequential, or it can sing through the years.” In this sense, Thuille sings on.

(Translated by W. Oliver Strunk)

<sup>2</sup>Miss Daniels has recorded her impressions of Thuille in her *An American Girl in Munich* (Boston, 1905).—Tr.



## CEREMONIAL DANCES OF THE SPANISH BASQUES

By VIOLET ALFORD

### THE AURRESKU, THE DANCE OF HONOUR

A FINE summer Sunday afternoon, an afternoon made for dancing, brings everyone out on to the plaza of the village. It is a plaza sloping down the mountainside looking out across the Bay of Biscay. It is shaded by plane trees, and the Ayuntamiento, the Mayor and Corporation, sit on a bench beneath them. The Ayuntamiento has a band of its own consisting of a single person. This person plays both pipe and drum like the old English pipe and tabors. The pipe is a three holed txistu, and its player, the txistulari, holds it in his left hand, and the drumstick in his right. The drum hangs from a strap round his neck. Sailors have strolled up from the harbour, fresh from their poaching in French waters; young farmers have come down from the heights, and there are girls in the newest fashions from San Sebastian with beautifully waved hair, each with her small mantilla of black lace over her arm, just come out of Vespers. There are a few in the costume of the province, Guipúzcoa; bright shawls, coloured or white head handkerchiefs, espadrilles smartly cross-gartered up their legs like ballet shoes. The men are in white, scarlet waist-sashes showing off their lithe Basque figures, scarlet or blue boinas on their heads. A long string of young men forms behind the best dancer, the Aurresku. He gives his left hand to the man behind him and leads him round in a wide circle. This stately walk comes to a standstill before the bench where the Mayor sits in state and judgement. The leader snatches off his *béret* and bursts into showers of wonderful steps (but still keeping his best up his sleeve). Out comes the last man in the line, the Atzesku. He dances, the leader replies. They wear set faces, for this a challenge and a dance duel. An arch is made by the leader and the next man, and the file passes beneath it. The bridge (*puente* is the name of the figure) weeds out unruly spirits or any who have been too long in the tavern. The bridge makers simply "cut off their heads," as in Oranges and Lemons, that ancient singing game. This figure is carried out to an awesome effect of rolling drums. Each now dances a few steps alone and moves on one place.

Now comes the solemn part of the ceremony. The Auresku sends four of his men to beg his chosen lady to honour him. Out they march and compel an indifferent, even unwilling damsel to accompany them. She is led to the place of honour and there stands prisoner, two men on either side, the Auresku exactly vis-à-vis. Off comes his béret again, he bursts into showers of steps different and more wonderful than his first display. He leaps violently three feet off the ground, throwing up each foot alternately until it nearly hits him in the face. He pauses and moves so gently that you think you were mistaken and that he never leapt at all. He makes one think of the bower bird posturing before his mate, but soon the hunched shoulders, the streaming brow, the glazed eyes destroy any such pretty comparison, and one becomes conscious of the brutality of his performance. At length it disgusts, and one wonders how the object of this animal display can stand there unmoved. He takes on the appearance of a

## Auresku

Collected by S. B. from the  
musicians of San Sebastian

Gracefully



Tune for "fetching the lady."

Minotaur, a bull dancing—if such a monstrous fantasy can be imagined—before his female. And all this to a delicate charming little tune. It is a solitary occurrence of sensuality in the sober Basque dances. After several of these curious pauses, during which the performing male seems to consider how next to display his prowess, the Auresku finishes with a final bravura and three polite bows, to the left, to the right, and to his patient lady. He then, the perspiration pouring down his face, presents her with one end of a handkerchief, himself holds the other end and leads her into the circle. This separating handkerchief was introduced by the priests some hundred years ago. One supposes it was felt

that some reform was needed, but it was certainly accepting the mountain while reforming the mole-hill. The last man sends for his partner in the same way, and so should they all, right into the houses if the girl is shy; but modern impatience cuts this short and the rest seek their partners in a body. The line, what with handkerchiefs and girls, is now trebled in length. Another bridge is made, the file passes under the handkerchief, and the music changes to a lively Fandango. The string breaks into couples, and here they are, hard at it, scattered all over the plaza.

The Ayuntamiento watches to see that tradition is adhered to. Nevertheless changes creep in. The Fandango, for instance. I find no description of the Aurreku before this intrusive Spanish element entered, so we do not know how the ceremonial ended before its coming. It was already there in 1820, yet in the middle of the 'seventies it is still alluded to disparagingly. The music too, evidently underwent a change about this time. It should be "un ritmo invariable y no con alteración de hoy." Perhaps the "alteración de hoy" was the introduction of a  $\frac{3}{4}$  tune suitable to the Fandango. The dance, in a hundred years, has hardly changed otherwise. Then as now the Aurreku leaped "con ardor," then as now the damsel accepted the exertions of her would-be partner with downcast eyes. Then as now she must not give the faintest smile of acquiescence, "a thing which would be much talked of" says a writer fifty years later,<sup>1</sup> "although a furtive glance may convey a previous understanding."

Sword Dance of Guipúzkoa (figure with Swords)

Well marked

Collected by V. A. & S. B. at San Sebastian



This is the "Zortziko" or  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm supposed to be so characteristic of Basque music.

<sup>1</sup>Los Vascongadas por Señor D. M. Rodriguez-Ferrar, 1873.

In a great, rich, far-away village I have seen a girl stand motionless, her eyes on the ground, a small, self-conscious smile upon her lips, dressed for the occasion in all the glory of the old regional costume. She seemed to become aware of the leaper, shuddering "first-hand" as he snatched off his *béret* on the final step.

Formerly fourteen to sixteen *Aurreskus* would be danced during a *fête*. Modern impatience again will not allow of this, for where would be the time for the fox-trots? The same writer tells us that "following an ancient custom, at the sound of the *Angelus* all uncover, and pipes and drums leading, they all march round the plaza." This respect for the Church is shown even in the middle of a *Pelote* match, for many a time have I seen the *pelotaris* uncover at the sound of the bell, and the match come to a standstill.

A solemn *Aurresku* opens the annual Basque Week at San Sebastian. The young President, Don Antonio de Orueta, sends four men into the Casa Consistorial (the Town Hall) to fetch the *Mayoress*, and in top hat and frock coat he dances before her. It is a sight to see this ceremonial opening in the great Plaza de la Constitución, beneath the rows of balconies still bearing their numbers belonging to the days when the plaza was the bullring, and the balconies the boxes.

I think a still more wonderful sight was the *Aurresku* at the Conferencia de Estudios Vascos (Conference of Basque Studies) at Vergara in July, 1930, when top-hatted and *béreted* delegates from all the provinces, and from the Basque Country across the seas, took part. They seemed to feel their coming emancipation from the monarchy which had suppressed their liberties, withdrawn their ancient privileges, and even then was working for the gradual extinction of their greatest possession, the age-old Basque speech. A misguided Royal Infante had come to the meeting. The thousands of Basques leaped "con ardor" the traditional leaps, and caring nothing for the Royal presence, rose bareheaded *en masse* to sing their song of national aspiration, *Guernikako Arbola*, the Tree of Guernika. The band, as misguided as the visitor, immediately afterwards struck up the Royal March of Spain and the vast assembly, to a man, sat down. The incident showed the way the wind blew in the Basque Provinces, and the revolution, nine months after, could hardly have surprised that particular member of the reigning house.

#### BASQUE SWORD DANCES

Sword dances are men's ceremony, that ceremony which spreads from end to end of Europe. Men are the executants and

always have been since the Corybants clashed swords and shields in their sacred dance. You do not trust a sword in a woman's hand, especially when that sword must kill. Although the Basque sword dances have somewhat diverged from it, there can be no doubt at all that they belong to that Spring rite from which, I suppose, sprang all the sword dances of Europe. They are different from the English, Czecho-Slovakian and Bacchu-Ber type in that they possess a battle figure. Why a hand to hand fight should be added to the ceremonial slaying in a nature rite is not clear. With the ritual dance, was there perhaps another signifying two parties? We find a battle figure in the Moresca of Korcula, a drama which links the Mummers' play, the Morris and the Sword dances in a satisfactory yet bewildering fashion; for the swords are not used against a Spring victim but to protect a Christian princess; the dancers are Christians and Turks (Here comes I, a Turkish Knight!) and the name is the word from which came the English "Morris".

Putting aside the battle figure, the Basque examples seemed to have strictly Morris-like figures, each man separate from his neighbour, clashing sticks, staves, or arches. But one Corpus Christi Day—amidst the confraternities, the bewigged pages, the white-froked "angels", the naval and military contingents—the *Ezpata Dantzariak* (sword dancers) of San Sebastian appeared outside their great church under the hill, covered with bells, linked hilt-and-point, forming a torpedo-like figure, the snout a single man grasping the points of the two swords of the men behind him, these two grasping the points of the two behind them. The whole company thus linked marched before the Host, and danced single-unders and other figures on the steps of the Church. This

#### Sword Dance of Guipúzkoa (figure with flowered arches)



Guipúzcoan dance, part of which was seen in London a year or two ago, is entirely remarkable. It is called a sword dance and possesses, as we have just seen, the hilt-and-point figure found all over Europe. But it also possesses Morris stick figures, a rare arch figure, a battle figure, and, not content with these riches, a

May-pole dance. It looks as though the various surviving forms of the Spring rite had attracted each other, been accepted by a set of sword or Morris dancers, and had now fused together. We know that folk-dances do take from one another, have indeed seen the process at work.

Here they come, marching beneath their flowery arches.

Another part of figure with flowered arches

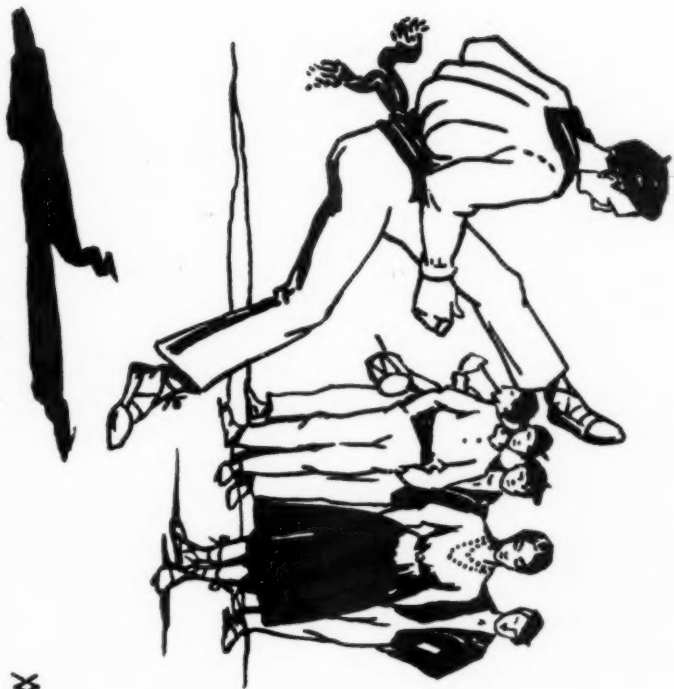
Collected by S. B. at San Sebastian



This tune is known in French Catalonia at the other end of the Pyrenees, where it is used as a Christmas Carol "La Nit de Nadal."

These are light, wooden half-hoops covered with paper roses, fastened to two long poles which are grasped in either hand. It is a large company in spotless white, splashed with the scarlet of bérêts and sashes, legs bound with heavy leather bell-pads. The music is majestic when shrilled forth by a band of txistularis who play in three parts and roll their drums finely. But it sounds familiar, and soon resolves itself into nothing more than the French chansonette *Il pleut, il pleut, bergère*. The figures are of the English country-dance type, oblique crossings, square heys for groups of four, casts-off and back-to-places. The step is a march throughout. You cannot dance while carrying a large flowery arch above your head. *Makil txikiak*, little sticks, may follow, a Morris stick dance containing three-handed heys and a rapid cast-off by the top couple, who meet at the bottom and clash sticks once, which movement is repeated by the bottom couple. Big sticks, *Makil aundiak*, is much more spectacular. The sticks are heavier and the hitting is so violent that it is by no means uncommon to see the top of one splinter off and hurtle away over the heads of the crowd. Now we may see a theatrical sort of figure called by the name of the whole, *Ezpata Dantza*. The company forms ranks of four, as many as eight deep occasionally, and with a sword in each hand goes through a series of mild, elegant little steps. The swords swing in circles, in cutting and clashing movements about each man's body, but they are not turned against each other. It is a weak and disappointing performance, reminiscent of school musical drill, wholly lacking the cleverness of our own English type. The music saves it from entire disapproval. It is danced to a *Zortziko*, one of those  $\frac{4}{4}$  tunes so difficult for any but a Basque ear.





### The Aurresku

(From a drawing by the author)

X



"The Hoisting of the Biscay Sword-Dance Captain"

(From a drawing by the author)

*Brokel Dantza* (bucklers) follows, the clashing of the little round shields making an exciting din. It is a good representation of a *mêlée* but has nothing to do with a Spring victim. *Arku txikiak* are half-hoops of some pliable wood. Is this a transition between bending steel and unbending wood? We get the same loops in the lock of the English rapper (rapier) dances, but these men use their hoops simply as sticks. They are clashed like the sticks, with excellent though curious effect. (The Curator of the Moravian Folk Museum at Brno, who knows as much about sword dances as any one in Europe, has photographs of an exactly similar figure in his part of the continent.) One of the company now firmly grasps a pole about seven feet high, in the center of the dancing place. It is hung with multicoloured ribbons. The rest of the troop each seize the end of a ribbon and proceed to plait the May-pole at high speed, using a fiercely rapid step. We are used to seeing children engaged in this decoration of the pole—we do not know what May-pole plaiting can be. These white-clad, scarlet-sashed fellows circle as widely as they can contrive, cut round on the outside edge, passing each other by a hair's breadth, shoulders aslope, eyes fixed on their track ahead like the eyes of a racing motorist. I saw a collision once. The two who met collided like two speed boats, and afterwards would gladly have met with knives, for a Basque accepts badly a public defeat or accident. We despise a May-pole display, saying that the ribbons are not "traditional." How do we know? Is it not simply because it reminds us of an infant school? What did they do round a May-pole in the real May-pole days? The only answer I can give with certainty is "Sellenger's Round danced of moonlight nights about May-poles." Thus the Round is described on a 17th century print of the music. They also roll a cheese round the pole and down the hill, at Cooper's Hill above Gloucester on a Whit Tuesday. But cheese and Sellenger's Round have no connection with ribbons. The latter is a country-dance showing a suggestive up-to-the-middle-and-back movement. The ring of dancers continually approaches the pole, in early days probably to touch it, thereby absorbing a fraction of its sanctity and fruitfulness. One of the earliest mentions of a May-pole comes from the time of King John, at Lostock in Lancashire, but no light is thrown on what went on round it. There are so many things to say about a May-pole; amusing things, scandalous things, pitiful things, coarse things, pretty things. It would require a whole article or book. Let us then cease nibbling at a grand subject and turn to another sword dance.

*Dancing on a Wall*

The Curator of the Brno Folk Museum, in his lecture at the Jubilee of the Folk Lore Society, said he considered choreography of as great importance as the subject matter of a dance. I agree fully as far as figures go, but when it comes to steps one has to consider regional influences and changes of fashion. At some time or other the gallop took immense hold on the dances of French Catalonia. To-day you meet the gallop step in all the "Balls". The Sardana alone seems exempt, and that because you cannot gallop in a hands-all-round formation. In the Basque country the Jota, which is the Fandango, intrudes its steps everywhere. The Fandango only arrived from Spain at the beginning of the 19th century—we have written evidence of its coming. For instance in 1873 it is spoken of as "Fandango o Jota aragonesa imitada,"<sup>2</sup> and its coming is deplored. The true Basque steps appear to be that triple or quadruple "galley", twisting the free foot in the air close to the standing foot; the little quiet steps, and the curious forward caper, throwing one foot after the other right up to face-level. The entrechat is international. The steps just mentioned are found in all the sword dances, and in one village are performed upon a wall.

It is a day of stormy skies, and brilliant stormy green, of hidden mountain tops and drenched slopes, the bracken all bowed down and silvery wet. The frontier post with grand simplicity says: "Navarra". What do the centralising señores in Madrid think of that? The frontier river is in spate, as brown as Spanish chocolate. The side valley to the south is of a green still more intense, like the green on Mauresque lustre ware. A vast church presides over its village; bells in the open belfry turn right over as they boom out the hour of Mass. It is the day of the patronal festival, and the patron is the Saint and Bishop, Firmin. Elegant girls in the last fashion, a light black mantilla covering their beautifully waved heads—dressmaker and hairdresser had no sleep, I fear—go up the paved path; the village fathers, the black bloused farmers all make churchwards. Inside, the gilt of a huge reredos gleams, the altar candles burn with a totally different coloured gold, and over the entire floor of the great, chairless nave this colour is repeated. Little flames burn low on the ground in front of each shrouded female figure, and reflect themselves dimly in the polished floor. The women crouching, kneeling, sitting on stools, might be Maltese wearing the faldetta. The Basque

<sup>2</sup>Rodriguez-Ferrar, *op. cit.*

mourning mantles and the mantillas turn them all into nuns. A cathedral-like organ, played by a master hand, leads cathedral-like singing of some 16th-century mass. Its rolling mode time and again resolves into a satisfying *tierce de Picardie*. Incensed twilight diapered with tiny flames, threaded with gilt, filled with splendid tone. Across this strikes a shrill music, an ardent, exciting drumming. The doors fling open, out sways Saint Firmin on the shoulders of his sons, for his yearly perambulation. He is met in the doorway by a great undulating flag, curling, dipping, bowing to him. *Bandera Dantza* done to a gay march, played by the brass band. Just so did the Biscayan dancers' flag dedicate the dancers to the work before them in the arena of the Albert Hall, London, in the winter of 1930-31. The shrill piping bursts out again. Here is a group of white-clad, scarlet-béreted youths, jingling bell-pads on their shins; ribbons crossed on their chests pass beneath breast and back-plates composed of sacred pictures, crosses, and symbols worked in sequins. These are the *Ezpata Dantzaris*, but their swords have become sticks round which red ribbons twine pacifically. Is not this one solid step towards proving the identity of sword and Morris dancers? The English Revesby Mummers' Play calls its sword dancers Morris men. Here Morris men call themselves sword dancers. There are two rows of six, the thirteenth, the Captain, carries no sword. At the sound of the txistus he dashes forward, and face to face with his patron saint, he dances out his heart and soul. His feet alternately fly above his head, sideways he goes and back again, then shoots straight up into the air in a final *entrechat*. Panting, satisfied that his yearly devotion is duly paid, he picks up the points of the sticks held by his first two men and leads out the double file locked hilt-and-point (if the sticks were swords)—the wedge of the long procession. Every now and again he turns back, raises his arms, and each file performs a single-under, one on each side of the Captain. The black-clad men of the parish process in pairs, each pair as far apart as the whole breadth of the street, the txistularis march in the middle, the dancers work their way from the head of the procession to their post below Saint Firmin's swaying golden figure, and back again. The women, apart as always in the Basque country, modestly bring up the rear. When the saint is safely housed for another year, the step becomes a quick march. The company briskly passes to the street, down the middle of which runs a brook. The gaily-bound sticks are lifted, meet to form an arch, and beneath the arch march the Ayuntamiento, Señor Cura, and the bearded, barefooted Capu-

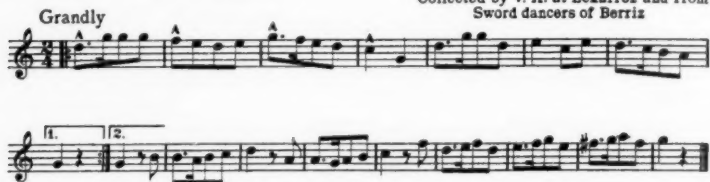
chin whose musician's hands have just compelled the organ to show its splendours. Now the Captain goes to the centre of the little bridge. Six of his men leap upon the wall on one side of the stream, six upon the wall on the other side. There, like great white-plumed birds with pink and glittering breasts aligned on a perch, they break into their best steps, the leader on the bridge always outdancing his men. All finish with their famous entrechats upon the wall. Anything more curious one can hardly hope to see. The air is the Guipúzcoan *Ezpata Dantza* tune, for although this is Navarre it is only just Navarre, and the dance type has not yet changed.

### *Los de Viscaya*

If we want to see real swords and swordsmen we must go westwards down the coast, and in a group of villages inland from Bilbao we find another fine, virile dance. Like that of Guipúzcoa, it consists of several figures, some with swords, some with nothing in the hands, one with sticks so massive that they are veritable clubs. The men wear bell-pads exactly like one form of Morris pads, scarlet bérets and sashes, and generally a buttonhole of their hardy regional flower, a yellow sempervivum. The tunes vary with the village and the txistulari. The dance begins with a dedication by the great undulating flag. They crouch low, heads touching the soil, as much to escape a stunning blow as out of respect for the ceremony, while the flagman sweeps them rhythmically over and over, brushing off bérets, undulating over each prostrate man his enormous flag. Even in the foreign surroundings of the Albert Hall, London, this caused a small sensation. On the plaza of an ancient, noble Biscayan town it is a remarkable and even a moving sight, not properly appreciated until it was realized, by analogy with the *Bandera Dantza* before Saint Firmin, that this is a true religious proceeding and must have a religious

#### Sword Dance of Biscay

Collected by V. A. at Lekarroz and from  
Sword dancers of Berriz



All these airs gain enormously when the drums are rolling and accentuating the rhythms.

signification. This first and the last figure lift the Biscay variant into the first rank of sword dances, although the hilt-and-point



movement really does seem lacking. Between them comes the exciting *Ezpata Jokua* (sword play) when each man attacks his opposite, bounding forward only to retire as he in turn is attacked. *Banakoa* and *Binakoa* (one by one and two by two) allow of good steps but are not of any ritual interest; *Makil Dantza*, the club dance, is strong, not to say violent; but the real thrill is reserved for the last figure. This goes by the astounding name of *Txonkórinka*. No need for hilt-and-point figures, no need for a lock round a man's neck. If ever there was a dead man, a victim-chief, you see him here. There is a sudden getting together of the company, and up in the air, stretched at full length above the heads of his men, the Captain appears. How did they finish him off so rapidly, so silently? One beat of music and he was dancing strongly, another beat and he disappears, a third beat and he reappears, stiff and stark, quiet for ever after the turmoil of the dance. The first time of seeing it one gasps. Sometimes there are two Captains, and they kill them both and display them together, two corpses laid out on air, side by side. And the great flag swirls in the rear, and the men point their swords inwards: how it can be said that this shows a Captain triumphant after battle, is more than imagination can compass.

This hoisting of the Captain links the Biscay tradition not only with the English and Slovakian, where we see both the dead man and the lock symbolic of his death, but with the old German tradition and that of the Vaudois valleys in Piedmont, where the Captains were and are displayed, standing erect on the lock before they fall. At Marquina (Biscay) some fifty years ago and near Santander to-day, the Captain was hoisted in this last manner. But certain persons, knowing nothing of the thousand other sword dances of Europe and never having heard of the Spring victim-chief, who like Adonis and Osiris, died annually that he might never grow old—cling to a battle fable. Was it this fable which in its turn gave rise to the battle figure, or was it the old story of town factions?

The only two pieces of real history that I have as yet found, amount to no more than this: the *Ezpata Dantzariak* of San Sebastian, numbering one hundred, have long danced, as they dance to-day, in the Corpus Christi procession. When Philip IV visited the town he witnessed the sacred procession and the sword dancers in it.<sup>3</sup> This was in the year 1660. In 1486, however, these young sparks were in the habit of causing trouble and even blood-

<sup>3</sup>Gipuzkoako Dantzak, J. I. de Iztueta, 1824.

shed. In that year the town of Vitoria issued an order mentioning "*las Danzas de espadas, por los escandalos y derramamiento de sangre que se ocasionaba con ellas*"<sup>4</sup>—the Sword dances, because of the scandals and shedding of blood which they provoked.

<sup>4</sup>Rodriguez-Ferrar, *op. cit.*

## VIEWS AND REVIEWS

NEXT February it will be fifty years ago that Richard Wagner died. It is nearly one hundred years since he began to attract public attention and to occupy the scribes. In that time more has been written about him than about any other composer. And the end is not in sight. Now that his music no longer lashes opponents and defendants into battle and is universally accepted as one of the purest manifestations of genius, the wrangle, with but slightly abated heat, continues over the dissonances in Wagner's personality and the manifest impurities of his character. New fuel is thrown into the flames every time some hitherto unpublished documents relating to his life are added to the vast amount of already available material.<sup>1</sup> More is to come. And yet it seems highly improbable that anything can essentially alter the picture of the man as we have learned to see him in all his strength and weakness. He will remain one of the most romantic apparitions of the ages, heir to all the merits and faults of human passion.

The latest contribution to the Wagner dossier comes from America: it is Mr. Elbert Lenrow's translation, "with critical notes", of "The Letters of Richard Wagner to Anton Pusinelli". These letters, as well as another and much more important collection of Wagneriana (the Burrell papers), were brought to the United States, not long ago, thanks to one of our most generous and public-spirited patrons of music. There may be an explanation, but hardly a valid reason, why Mr. Lenrow in his introduction should have thrown the veil of anonymity over the purchaser and present owner of these papers; Mr. Ernest Newman, in the concluding pages of his recent "Fact and Fiction about Wagner", was not troubled by such reticence in publishing what Mr. Lenrow regrettably failed, or was forbidden, to disclose.

Far more regrettable is the fact that, while Mr. Lenrow went about his task with the commendable intention of expanding his book into a rounded story of the events referred to in these letters, his very aim has apparently prevented him from giving us the

<sup>1</sup>The Letters of Richard Wagner to Anton Pusinelli. Translated and edited with critical notes by Elbert Lenrow. xxvii, 293, x pp. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1932. \$5.00.

Fact and Fiction about Wagner. By Ernest Newman. xvii, 318 pp. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1931. \$3.50.

The Women in Wagner's Life. By Julius Kapp. Translated from the German by Hannah Waller. xiii, 284, iv pp. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1931. \$4.00.

letters themselves as we should have liked to see them presented. Here was unpublished material: whole letters that had never before been printed, sections of other letters which had been subjected to pruning and mutilation when first made public. Much ink has been wasted in argument over the editorial tamperings of the House of Wahnfried and its liegemen. Dark plots were hinted at, schemes laid to hide still darker deeds. As if the shadows cast by the colossus in the sun of his effulgence were not sombre enough. The excisions were largely due to a sense of tact and decency not uniformly exhibited by the persons involved. Even Mr. Ernest Newman, *Allwater* of the perfect Wagnerites, who in the past has bitterly inveighed against the censorial practices of Bayreuth, confesses that he is "inclined to take a rather more charitable view of it all now . . . perhaps what Cosima and the others did was no more than any widow and any friends would do in similar circumstances." And so it was. Wagner's "*wabernde Lohe*" did not die at his death. It continued to burn, to shine, and to sear. Time cools the fires; or we learn to look at them through the smoked glasses of tolerance. But so many of the recent Wagner "disclosures," heralded as sensational or shocking, have turned out to be no more than mildly interesting.

Mr. Lenrow qualifies his publication of the Pusinelli letters as "one of the first attempts to supplant the old 'editing' with an edition that is critical and complete." Had he succeeded in this, there would be occasion for loud rejoicing and national pride. But it is difficult to agree with him that the edition is either critical or complete. The latter state would have been more scrupulously, more satisfactorily achieved had Mr. Lenrow given us in an appendix the hitherto unpublished portions of this correspondence in the original German text. It could have been done in smaller type, would not necessarily have taken up a great deal of space; and for the sake of these originals we should have been willing to give up many of Mr. Lenrow's "critical notes," in some of which he repeats too confidently what uncritical predecessors have written before him.

The translation of letters—of Wagner's letters especially—is a difficult job. On the whole, Mr. Lenrow has done it well. But comparison of certain of his translations with the previously published originals, gives rise to the impression that the effort "to present an exact and literal equivalent in English of what Wagner wrote in German" has not been invariably successful. (Good examples for such comparison will be found in letters 25 and 28.) Some errors are slight; others give a wrong turn to Wagner's

meaning. The discovery of such inaccuracies leaves an uncomfortable feeling. It would be greatly lessened, had we the unpublished originals to revert to. Therefore it strikes us as futile when Mr. Lenrow expresses the hope that before long "these letters in their original form will be published in Germany." The time to print the hitherto unpublished sections in German as well as in English was now, and the place was America. Thus American scholarship could indeed have rendered a service to all students and biographers of Wagner, and we could have pointed with satisfaction to this American contribution as a truly valuable one. The opportunity for it was certainly enticing.

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Wagner's correspondence with the physician Anton Pusinelli, of Dresden, and his family, covers thirty-five years, from 1843, when Wagner was thirty years old, until Pusinelli's death, in March, 1878. Few friendships of Wagner's lasted that long. To very few friends—although a number of them might have deserved it—did he write as he wrote to Pusinelli on Jan. 2, 1877:

Dear good old friend:

I look back over my years, and there, again and again, I encounter the most friendly man who ever found his way to me.

This New Year's greeting from Bayreuth is the last message of Wagner to Pusinelli in the collection. If we turn to the first, dated Teplitz, August 1, 1843, we read in the opening paragraph of Wagner's letter:

I am little able to win friends—my 'good star' must bestow them on me. There is, however, a certain 'look' by which one knows a friend—it sometimes needs merely the calling of one another by name, and the thing is done. And in this way all good luck comes,—who therefore would be doubtful of your faith? Let us both abide by this and be friends for life!

Between these two dates lies the friendship of a lifetime, in Wagner's case the exception. It became possible only because Pusinelli was at all times a willing victim of this friendship, because he had qualities of heart—rather than intellect—which Wagner found useful. And yet Wagner unquestionably learned to hold Pusinelli in real affection, while the doctor combined warm admiration for the composer with understanding for the pathological type. What a reflection on the literally hundreds of people who tried, at some time or other, to help Wagner, when he writes to Pusinelli in 1867: "I have found few like you, almost none!" This *Leitmotiv* is sounded again, even more emphatically, in January, 1870: "You are still the only one in my life who remains

entirely pure and lovable to me! Believe me, I know what I am saying—the Only One!" And Pusinelli's eyes were open; he wrote to Wagner in May, 1870: "I have been one of the first to recognize you, and I have never let myself be mistaken in having a high opinion of your greatness." Three months later he boldly admitted: "I know that in your heart I hold one of the foremost places; I wish to maintain my place there." Apparently he did.

Pusinelli rose to a high position in his profession. In 1868 he was appointed physician to the royal children of Saxony. When his own children were ill, he wisely wrote to Wagner's wife Minna (June 6, 1861): "Yet with God's help [not with his own!] everything has passed by fortunately." And in the same letter he told Minna that all members of his family sent greetings to her, except one who was temporarily engaged: "My mother-in-law is taking a bath!"

Pusinelli was good-natured, naïve. He served Wagner on many occasions by loaning him money, sometimes comparatively large sums. If patient Pusinelli had a sense of humor, he must have smiled on reading (under date of March 31, 1846): "However, to-morrow I must settle one thing, if my position is not to appear truly suspicious, and so I am once more turning to my truest friend with the question whether, by making a little sacrifice, he can help me out again by letting me have 500 rth. for four weeks—until the end of April. In this connexion, I must say that the 30 thalers which you recently advanced me are now at your disposal. (I would have sent them along with this if they were not in silver.)" And then the Postscript: "Could you perhaps let me have 100 rth. to-day?" Pusinelli was of particular help to Wagner in the early relations of the composer with his publishers, and in the final relations of the husband with his first wife, Minna. Wagner wrote to him from Munich, on Dec. 7, 1856: "In the history of my life you will shine forth in a way that is bright and beautiful, warm and friendly." There are few men who can vouchsafe to their intimates that sort of immortality. After Pusinelli's death his widow wrote to Wagner: "Your friendship was in every respect a blessing to him." At one moment it might have turned into a source of wealth, though perhaps not immediately discernible as such.

In one of Wagner's expansive fits, when any promise seemed good enough to further the exigencies of the hour, he wrote to Pusinelli from Zurich (Oct. 10, 1856): "I have in mind to work out a new subject which I have conceived with great love—Tristan and Isolde; this will be as large as Tannhäuser, but it will be much



lighter and ought in any case to make the rounds of German theatres quickly. This work, dear Anton, I offer you in advance in case you shall have found little hope of realizing, from the three older operas, some measure of compensation for the sacrifices you made for me. It shall be given over to you then, without any charge."

The doctor could not have known that by not taking up the offer he was letting a lucrative deal slip out of his hands. Nor could anyone else. And what was Wagner's conception of Tristan then, if he could describe it as "much lighter" than "Tannhäuser?"

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Most of these letters gain in interest, of course, because we read them at a fair distance from their dates of writing. We have the advantage of reading them in the light of later events. And Wagner's shifty tactics, the incredible situations in which he found himself, the amazing complications into which he was drawn, the steadfastness of his ideals and ambitions, stand out more clearly, if we follow the erratic turns of his fate as they are reflected in his letters. But here, too, we encounter Wagner's attempts at blowing over the mirror with the breath of distortion, so that the true outlines are not always recognizable. He was disingenuous if it served his selfish ends. But without that selfishness there never would have been the masterworks he left us. Creative force knows not morality. Moral laws were invented for the protection of the weak and unproductive.

Mr. Lenrow's attempt at steering through the Scylla and Charybdis of Wagner's amatory relations suffers the usual shipwreck on the hidden rocks that bar the entrance to the Cosima haven. The passage is choked with flotsam which might have served as a warning, had Mr. Lenrow exercised a little caution. But he harkened to the siren voice of Mr. Ernest Newman and set his course by the false star of Dr. Julius Kapp; in consequence, he came to grief. The disaster, however, is made serious only because Mr. Lenrow drags down with him the reputation of the one stainless character in the drama, Hans von Bülow.

We are told by Mr. Lenrow that "Cosima had given birth to Wagner's first child, Isolde, in April (1865), and although this was at first concealed by Bülow's claim of paternity, the truth must have become generally known, and it could not have helped Wagner's already doubtful reputation." On the next page of Mr. Lenrow's book we read that Minna was in "distress at Wagner's

having been made a father under circumstances which exposed her to ridicule wherever the story circulated." These statements are misleading. No evidence has been produced, so far, to show that Bülow did not believe himself to be the father of Isolde when the child was born. Nor was it ever satisfactorily established that she could not have been Bülow's daughter. She was named Isolde, because her birth fell in the midst of the preparations for the "Tristan"<sup>2</sup> performance under Bülow's direction. Wagner acted as godfather of the child. If Bülow's honor was defiled, it is doubtful whether he knew it then; to infer that, by "concealing" the wrong, he supinely condoned it, is rather adding insult to injury. The assumption that "the truth must have become generally known" in 1865, or that it became known to Minna before her death on January 25, 1866, has yet to be substantiated. If there is positive proof of it in the papers of the Burrell collection, it remains to be published.

At best, it is a sorry business to try to unravel the web of lies and suppositions that has been allowed to mantle what in the eyes of the world is looked upon as unsavory license rather than as tragic necessity. And the actors of the tragedy have helped much in the weaving. Perhaps because in their own minds and hearts they could not always distinguish where license ended and necessity began. If they were unable to see clear, how much more difficult is it for us. Interpretations are hazardous; but there are facts that speak for themselves.

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Mr. Lenrow gives us vaguely to understand that, beginning with the spring of 1863, "his [Wagner's] intimacy with Cosima [von Bülow] was becoming ever more intensified." Wagner tells us in his autobiography that when he passed through Berlin in November, 1863, Cosima and he "silently acknowledged" their love for one another. "With tears and sobs we sealed our confession to belong to each other alone." This sentence in quotation marks was struck out, presumably by Cosima, when Wagner's autobiography was made public in 1911. What was her reason? Was it done because she realized later that, if such a confession or promise was really made, Wagner would have cheerfully disregarded it, had not fate decreed otherwise?

In March, 1864, when Wagner's finances had once more reached their lowest ebb, he wrote from Vienna to Pusinelli that

<sup>2</sup>Where did Mr. Lenrow see this opera performed and behold Tristan "lying in bed in the third act?" Was it a Simmons or a Murphy?

"in everyone's opinion"—which means chiefly his own—the only way out of his difficulties "would be a new marriage with a suitable wife of sufficient wealth." He no longer lived with Minna; but the wish to induce Minna, "in her extremely hazardous state of health, to consent to a divorce" from him "would indeed be an inhuman undertaking and one for which I could scarcely summon up courage." He mentions that other people with whom he has apparently discussed this possibility have advanced extenuating motives to silence his "scruples." He concedes that the perfect mate has yet to be found. But at least he knows what he wants:

My necessary requirements are cultivation of heart and mind; an age which would suit my own and therefore cause me no embarrassment in the future; and true independence, with means sufficient for that, so that I should be completely above the need of actually 'making money,' in addition to which is included the matter of properly taking care of my divorced wife by this means. Now, I have become conscious, through sufficient and strangely flattering experiences up to the present time, that soulful feminine natures cling to me easily to the point of wildest adoration and through this become capable of the most extreme surrender. Reconcile, who can, the vainglorious cad and cynic with the incomparable master and idealist.

These proposals four months after having pledged to Cosima eternal and undivided love! Wagner's memory, when he wrote his autobiography, was not unexceptionably reliable. But censorious Cosima, in 1911, may well have remembered the contents of this letter to Pusinelli, which she must have seen in 1900 when the correspondence was submitted to her, and she politely but firmly vetoed its publication. The extracts, published in 1902, were carefully selected and edited by Wahnfried.

Mr. Lenrow is rather lenient in his "critical notes" on "this wholly unfortunate letter" of March 21, 1864; he admonishes us that, instead of criticizing Wagner, we should feel admiration "for the courage and conviction with which he nevertheless persevered" under these trying circumstances. Fortunately there are better grounds on which to admire the creator of *Die Meistersinger* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. But leniency is no crime; our quarrel is with Mr. Lenrow's reckless handling of the Bülow-Wagner situation, as it developed after King Ludwig had rescued the desperate composer. The delicate—and the crucial—question in this tangle remains: just when did Cosima's growing "intimacy" with Wagner result in her "most extreme surrender?" and just when did Bülow gain full knowledge of it?

When Wagner before going to Russia, early in 1863, visited the Bülows in Berlin, Cosima was expecting the birth of her second child. When he left Russia, at the end of April, he stopped in

Berlin, and immediately went to Bülow's apartment. Cosima had been delivered of a daughter, Blandine, who unquestionably was Bülow's child. The visit was brief, cheerful, and apparently led to no emotional outbursts. Cosima and Richard met again in Berlin on Nov. 28 of the same year, 1863. On the 29th, while Bülow was busy with the preparations for a concert which he conducted on the evening of that day, Cosima and Richard took the memorable drive on which they confessed to each other their "boundless misery." It was a gloomy, tearful affair, and evidently quite platonic. Wagner attended Bülow's concert with Cosima. Afterwards all three of them dined copiously—too copiously to suit Wagner's disturbed equanimity—with a friend of theirs; and having spent the night with the Bülows, Wagner left the next morning for Silesia. The farewell reminded him

so vividly of that first exquisitely pathetic parting from Cosima at Zurich, that all the intervening years vanished like a dream of desolation separating two days of lifelong moment and decision. If on the first occasion our presentiment of something mysterious and inexplicable had compelled silence, it was now no less impossible to give words to that which we silently acknowledged.

Yet, so far the trust of Bülow had apparently not been violated; and Wagner's pledge to Cosima still counted for little.

Wagner returned to Vienna on the evening of Dec. 9, 1863; it was a Wednesday. The return had been announced to his "Liebes Mariechen," the pleasant and obliging chambermaid, who had been urged by Wagner to heat the rooms, to perfume them ("Kauf die besten Flacons, um es recht wohlduftend zu machen") and to dress herself in new "pink panties" (*Die Rosa-Höschen sind doch hoffentlich auch fertig?*). By March, 1864, Wagner had been reduced, after a series of the worst luck, to the necessity of considering the hunt for a rich wife. He wrote to Pusinelli that he was "completely destitute." He had to flee from Vienna. Then came the miraculous intervention of young Ludwig, the meeting on May 3rd, in Stuttgart, with the King's Secretary who had orders to bring Wagner immediately to Munich.

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For the summer of 1864, the King had installed Wagner on the shores of Lake Starnberg, near his own castle of Berg. Wagner's house was large, too large for his loneliness. In the last week of May he wrote to Bülow:

I am full of the most genuine love, the purest intentions—but my house is desolate, and now, for the first time, I feel this more painfully than ever. Good souls, now do help me over these first days. People my house! A whole storey is ready for you and your dear family—Cosima shall come with the two children.

At this point we should draw upon another batch of Wagner's correspondence, the letters to his young friend and worshiper, Mathilde Maier, only recently published in the original German.<sup>3</sup>

On June 22, 1864, he wrote to Mathilde, telling her that he expected the visit of the Bülowes "for a couple of months," and urging her to join him and "keep house" for him. "My need is not to be ignored—it must be stilled. I speak of nothing but of this domestic, familiar need." He foresees objections:

always these miserable bourgeois considerations; and this with so much love! . . . It can't, it can't go on like this—a decision has to be made, and I fear that you will lose me some day, if you do not wholly help me . . . I beg you, come in September, look at it, help me—name your conditions, what you will, only so long as I have you!

On June 25 Wagner wrote a long letter to Mathilde's mother circumstantially explaining his paternal longing for a young, cheerful girl—her daughter—to be around him, since he needed "a female being" who would attend to his household. He enclosed it in a letter to Mathilde, whom he assured: "I have no one, whom I might have in mind, to take your place."

Mathilde did not give Wagner's letter to her mother. Instead she answered him, apparently, that the letter would "annihilate" her mother. On June 29 Wagner replied, still in a kindly tone, but visibly disappointed and a little annoyed. Somewhat puzzling is the meaning of the sentence: "Fear no going astray (*Abwege*) on my part; for the present I am expecting the visit of friends."

Cosima and her two little daughters arrived a day or two later. Bülow followed on July 7; he was in a nervously and physically poor condition. He shared his wife's quarters in Wagner's house.

On July 19 Wagner writes to Mathilde in a quite different vein. He hopes that she did not, and will not, show his letter of June 25 to her mother. That now he refuses to accept the sacrifice of Mathilde's family in letting her come to him, even should her mother consent to the proposition he had previously made. He tries to explain his change of attitude by telling Mathilde:

After having lived again through much within me, I have recognized most clearly that I can suit myself to everything, renounce everything, only one thing I can most decidedly not do, namely suffer new heartpangs, disquietude and constraint caused by apprehensive, passionate emotion.

He tells Mathilde categorically that her coming to him now would completely upset him, even if she were willing to exercise "the most delicate and loving discretion and secrecy." Why this abrupt change

<sup>3</sup>"Richard Wagner and Mathilde Maier (1862-1878)", edited by Dr. Hans Scholz, T. Weicher, Leipzig, 1930.

of key? Did Cosima's "extreme surrender" fall between June 29 and July 19? Or did Wagner merely sense that it was imminent? Little Isolde was born on April 10 of the following year.

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In the Spring of 1914 the world was treated to the unpleasant spectacle of Isolde, then the wife of the conductor Franz Beidler, suing her mother for recognition as the child of Wagner. The immediate cause for the suit was the termination, in 1913 (30 years after Wagner's death), of the copyright protection of his works in Germany, and the cut in revenues to the Wagner family resulting from it. In 1912 Isolde's share had been about 29,000 Marks; for the first six months in 1913 she had received nearly 17,000 Marks. In June, 1913, Cosima's and Siegfried Wagner's attorney wrote Isolde a letter in which it was proposed that henceforth she was to be paid a fixed yearly amount of only 12,000 Marks, and the letter was significantly addressed to "Frau Isolde Beidler, née von Bülow!"

Isolde took up the gauntlet. The case was heard in Bayreuth. Mr. Ernest Newman, ordinarily so reliable in untwisting the skein of the Wagner saga, got his facts absurdly mixed when he wrote in his book on "Wagner as Man and Artist" that "In May, 1914 Cosima [!] appealed to the German courts to declare that Isolde was Wagner's child, not Bülow's." To this statement Mr. Newman appended some further erroneous reflections. Nor did he take occasion to correct the error when he referred to this passage in his more recent and furious demolition of two would-be Wagner biographers ("Fact and Fiction about Wagner"). The case of Isolde Beidler was dismissed by the court, which, basing its decision on strictly provable facts, held that for legal purposes Isolde must be regarded as the child of Bülow, not of Wagner. Dr. Julius Kapp, whom Mr. Newman calls "so well-informed and so alert," erred equally when he wrote that "the outbreak of the war left the case unsettled." It was settled, so far as the courts were concerned. Justice, we know, carries a bandage over her eyes. In the course of the litigation Cosima's side produced, as one of its strongest arguments, the last will and testament of Richard Wagner which recognized as only child of his marriage with Cosima the son Siegfried, and divided the estate between his widow and his son!

It is highly questionable, therefore, whether Mr. Lenrow is not assuming too much when he says that Wagner boasted the paternity of Isolde at her birth, that his parenthood was "concealed"



complacently by Bülow, that "the truth [?!] must have become generally known," and that Minna knew of it.

Wagner's letters to Mathilde Maier make it clear that Cosima did not arrive in Starnberg before June 25. In a letter to his friend, Mrs. Eliza Wille, dated June 30, Wagner writes: "Yesterday [June 29!] Frau von Bülow arrived with two children and nurse-maid; her husband will follow." This must be accepted as settling the date of Cosima's arrival. Mr. Lenrow still wonders about this date, thrown into perplexity by Mr. Newman who ("Wagner as Man and Artist", p. 126) claims that, at Isolde's paternity trial in Bayreuth in 1914, "Cosima had declared that from June 12 [!] to October 12, 1864 she had lived in intimate relations with no one but Wagner." This assertion is erroneous, on the face of it. Since Cosima, at that trial, was intent upon making Isolde appear as the child of Bülow, not of Wagner, the defendant mother's alleged declaration would have been playing into the hands of her plaintiff daughter.

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Mr. Lenrow writes: "In July (1864) the whole Bülow family removed to Munich." That statement, too, is erroneous. The "removal" of the family to Munich did not take place until November. Bülow, after a brief stay in Starnberg, went to the Hotel Bayrischer Hof in Munich, where he lay ill. The children apparently were left for the time "under the wing of the Wagner household."<sup>4</sup>

Cosima, during the week of August 21, joined Liszt in Karlsruhe for the festivities of the Allgemeine Tonkünstler-Versammlung. Bülow had been expected to conduct these concerts. His illness—described in the papers as a "gastric-rheumatic fever which confined the ordinarily so indefatigably active artist to his bed already in July, during his stay in Starnberg"—prevented it.

From Karlsruhe, at the end of August, Liszt accompanied Cosima on her return to Munich, intending only to see Bülow. But Cosima prevailed on her father to go to Starnberg, for a short reconciliation, and visit Wagner. "It was undoubtedly a triumph for Cosima, as well as an absolute necessity, to bring her father and her friend Wagner together," writes Du Moulin-Eckart. From Munich, Liszt went to Weimar, and "on the same day Cosima returned with her husband to Berlin, where alone he hoped to find a cure."

<sup>4</sup>Du Moulin-Eckart, "Cosima Wagner", p. 163.

From the indications contained in the letters of Wagner to Mathilde Maier, before and after Cosima's arrival at Starnberg in the summer of 1864, we may reasonably surmise that the sudden and complete change from a burning "need" for Mathilde to a frantic request that she stay away, was caused by a sudden and complete change in his relations with Cosima. And the rest is silence.

As regards the question: when were Bülow's eyes opened to this change? even well-informed and alert students of the Wagnerian backstairology find themselves in a muddle. Mr. Lenrow, therefore, may be excused if he did not see farther than they did among these contradictory accounts; but by accepting too rashly some of Dr. Kapp's loose theories, he has given to uninformed readers the impression that Bülow, one of God's true noblemen, was not only cuckold but pimp and pander.

Without citing his source, Dr. Kapp writes ("The Women in Wagner's Life", p. 220-21):

Tormented by the desire to see his beloved, Wagner was at last rewarded by her arrival at his house (in Tribschen, Switzerland) on May 12, 1866. But an ardent love-letter from Wagner to Cosima arrived shortly after she had left Munich, and was opened by Bülow, who thought that it might contain information that would have to be telegraphed to his wife. Thus the whole bitter truth was revealed to him; the stupendous lie of the last two years stared him mercilessly in the face.

A Frenchman once said: "*Il est permis d'être cocu, mais non point, le sachant, de rester ridicule.*" We like to imagine that these words express a sentiment to which Baron Hans von Bülow would have unhesitatingly subscribed. His general demeanor, beginning with the Autumn of 1868, shows that then indeed he did know, and that he was unwilling to incur ridicule by accepting his dishonor blindly, though eventually he bowed to it resignedly, magnanimously. But to say that for two, or possibly four years, Bülow closed both eyes to his wife's relations with Wagner, seems a misreading of Bülow's character which completely distorts the situation. It would mean that Bülow consented to have the King publicly proclaim, as he did in June 1866 upon Cosima's solicitation, his indifference to the growing and insidious slander against Wagner and Cosima; it would mean that Bülow, in order to save his own skin, conspired to expose to shameless ridicule, not himself, but the King of Bavaria! Wagner was capable of that, and, under his influence, Cosima. But not Hans von Bülow.

Dr. Kapp does not furnish us with any information whence comes his account of the "discovery" in 1866. Mr. Lenrow, without challenging Dr. Kapp's account, writes:

For appearance' sake, he (Bülow) joined the other two (in August 1866) in Tribschen and spent two months there until he was convinced that Cosima had no intention of returning to him. He consented to a divorce, on condition that Cosima should not be united to Wagner until after two years for the sake of the world's view-point—and that meanwhile she should live with Liszt in Rome. This condition was refused by Cosima. Bülow withdrew, leaving the children with his wife; later he ceased to have any relations with Cosima or with Wagner.

This is the sort of telescoped summary, bristling with errors or surmises, which must serve most writers on this nebulous phase of the Wagner-Bülow situation, when they have nothing definite to go by. For one thing, the "later" relations of Bülow with Cosima and Wagner are not mere conjecture. There are Bülow's letters to Wagner after May 12, 1866, and up to June 21, 1869, or two weeks after the birth of Siegfried (June 6). There are Bülow's letters to Cosima, from the desperately courageous letter of renunciation, dated June 17, 1869, to one that was written from Meiningen in October, 1881. Still later ones may have been destroyed or remain unpublished. So much for Bülow's relations with Wagner and Cosima after August, 1866.

As concerns Bülow's consent to a divorce, there is not the faintest sign of it in 1866. Not even in the letter to Cosima, of June 17, 1869, did he propose more than that the separation between himself and Cosima be "completed." He expressly writes that he does not intend to subject Cosima to the splash and fuss of a divorce—he will consent to it only if Liszt (himself the father of three children, though never married) desires that the association of his daughter Cosima with Wagner be "officially affirmed." The divorce of Hans and Cosima was pronounced by the courts in Berlin on July 18, 1870; the marriage of Cosima and Richard took place in Lucerne on August 25.

When Du Moulin-Eckart published this important letter of June 17, 1869 in his volume of Bülow correspondence (1927), he made the singular mistake of letting Bülow explain his attitude toward a divorce by saying that he had "*aucune envie, disposition, velléité de me remercier*." (All of Bülow's letters to Cosima are in French.) This obviously is a glaring misreading of the last word which should be "*remarrier*": Bülow at the time of writing had no desire to remarry, hence he had no personal reason for wanting more than a legal separation. The "alert" Dr. Kapp, confronted with the translation of this cryptic sentence, turns it with a deft sleight-of-hand into "*keine Lust, Neigung, oder Anwandlung, mich auszuschalten*" (what does he mean?) which in the English version—with a little closer approach to verisimilitude—becomes "no desire, inclination, or velleity to regain my freedom."

This merely as an instance of what editors and translators can do to a person's letters, and as a reason for the legitimate demand that, where such documents are first issued in a translation, the originals be included, since not even the originals are always correctly deciphered and copied.

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When Dr. Kapp revised the first edition (1912) of his "Richard Wagner und die Frauen" in 1929—from which revision the English translation was made—he had before him Count Du Moulin-Eckart's life of Cosima Wagner, based on a great deal of hitherto unpublished material. The Count put the time of Bülow's awakening to the "bitter truth" in the Autumn of 1868, after Wagner, exhausted from the nervous strain incident to the preparation for the "Meistersinger" première on June 21, had prevailed upon Cosima to travel with him in Italy. In Du Moulin-Eckart's account, also, it is a letter opened "in the most innocent way" that made Bülow "aware of this journey and the full import of the Master's relations with Frau Cosima." And Bülow took up pistol practice.

Dr. Kapp omits mention of Count Du Moulin-Eckart's fateful letter, realizing probably that he himself had shot the same arrow into May, 1866, or two years and three months before, and could not well come a second time with the same ammunition! Nor does he attempt to reconcile his own tale of May, 1866 with the Count's story of the Autumn, 1868; and so he leaves his bewildered readers to make the best of it when he merely writes:

Meanwhile the faithful Bülow had been placed in an insupportable position through Cosima's secret flight from Munich. In the first flood of emotion on hearing from Cosima, who had gone with Wagner to northern Italy, where he was travelling for his health, that she had definitely left him, Bülow's impulse was to expiate this betrayal of friendship by a pistol-shot.

Mr. Lenrow, apparently, knew no better way out of the dilemma than by ignoring entirely Count Du Moulin-Eckart's story, unmindful that in following Dr. Kapp's insecure footsteps he exposed poor Bülow to contempt more than to pity. In June, 1868, during the preparations for the "Meistersinger" première in Munich, Bülow gave Wagner hospitality under his roof in the Arcostrasse. Still Mr. Lenrow does not shy, but asks us—in a footnote—to believe that "To avoid any cause for public scandal, Bülow had not yet broken openly with Wagner." And then Mr. Lenrow patronizingly adds that Bülow should be given "due credit" for having "remained loyal during this time" and for having "worked

himself to exhaustion" in conducting Wagner's operas. The credit is small compared with the debit charged to Bülow in Mr. Lenrow's "critical notes."

There is no plausible explanation (unless it be Du Moulin-Eckart's) why Bülow should have exercised such self-control in June, 1868 and in September should have reached for a gun; why he should have meekly suffered indignity if he knew "the bitter truth" already in May, 1866, as Dr. Kapp thinks, or if he obligingly "concealed" it as early as 1864, which Mr. Lenrow seems to imply. Dr. Kapp is given to romancing; he is not always reliable; he does not clearly separate proved facts from his personal theories. Mr. Newman has some damning things to say about "most musical biographers," while he has nothing but praise for "that sound Wagnerian scholar Julius Kapp." On this point, as on some others, one might differ with the distinguished Englishman. When Mr. Lenrow continues the editing of the Wagner material now in America—as we sincerely hope he will—let him weigh more carefully the assertions of even Messrs. Kapp and Newman. And especially, let him exert every effort to obtain from the publisher the assurance that any hitherto unpublished documents will be given to us in both the translation and the original. Or is this expecting too much from American scholarship and enterprise?

C. E.



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